Facilitating local resilience: case studies of place-based approaches in rural Scotland

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Facilitating local resilience: case studies of place-based approaches in rural Scotland

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Summary

What were we trying to find out?

This report explores the extent to which place-based approaches can deliver positive economic and social outcomes in Scotland's rural areas and small towns.

What did we do?

We studied five case studies of place-based approaches in rural Scotland:

1. Tackling the climate emergency in Callander
2. Strengthening Communities in the Western Isles
3. A Heart for Duns: the changing role of a local development trust
4. Partnership working for place-based policy: lessons from Initiative at the Edge
5. Land reform policy and transformational community change

What did we learn?

Place-based approaches in rural Scotland have enabled community capacity building, community ownership/management of land and assets, and partnership-working to deliver local outcomes and services. A flexible national and regional place-based policy framework can be supportive of local place-based approaches, but should acknowledge different local circumstances, assets and needs, and the lived experiences of local people.

What needs to change in the future?

Place-based approaches require financial and other development support/advice in the early stages. This might be particularly in relation to locally-led community planning to address place-based needs, acquiring local community assets and creating links between local actors and broader regional/national policy processes. More flexible place-based policy frameworks should be developed at national and regional level which facilitate cross-sectoral working, break down silos and encourage collaboration between different actors and governance levels (including communities and local authorities).

What do we recommend?

The research identifies four recommendations to enhance rural place-based approaches:

1. Long-term, flexible investment in place-based approaches is needed to ensure the delivery of solutions rooted in community needs and local action.
2. Communities need to be able to operate with a degree of autonomy to increase competence, capacity and confidence at the local level.

3. This local autonomy needs support from national/regional levels over the long-term, by transferring resources, ensuring that the voices and experiences of communities are heard, and working in (equal) partnership across governance levels.
4. There is a need for mechanisms by which the key features and requirements of national and regional policy are translated into something tangible and relevant at the local level.

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1 Introduction

This report explores the extent to which place-based approaches can deliver positive economic and social outcomes in Scotland's rural areas and small towns. The research is based on five case studies that span different geographical, temporal and sectoral perspectives. Common themes from the case studies inform key learning points for how future policy could support positive outcomes from place-based approaches in rural Scotland.

What is a place-based approach?[1]

Traditionally, place-based approaches referred to the spatial focusing of resources (usually money) on areas with a 'problem' to tackle. More recently, the term has been used to describe a particular way of working at local level, with an emphasis on a holistic and partnership-based approach to improve people's life outcomes. These approaches often involve mapping and profiling the features of a place to inform the development of an asset-based approach.[2] A place-based approach has been defined as:

> "A community of people bound together because of where they live, work or spend a considerable proportion of their time, coming together to make changes to that place which they believe will improve the physical, social or economic environment and in doing so tackle issues of inequality"[3]

In national policy terms, the place-based approach was strongly advocated in the 2011 Christie Commission which called for radical changes to the way that public services are delivered, including the need for more participation, partnership working and an emphasis on place. These three themes are also present in the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, which includes the statutory requirement that Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) divide their areas into smaller localities.

Recent Scottish Government Programmes for Government have also emphasised the importance of place and interventions which build on local place-based assets, with the central involvement of local communities, to tackle social and economic inequalities.

[1] For a full review, see Atterton, J. (2017). Place-based policy approaches and rural Scotland. Working Paper from RESAS Research Deliverable 3.4.2 Place-based policy and its implications for policy and service delivery.
[2] Using tools such as the Place Standard and Understanding Scottish Places.
[3] An operational definition proposed by the Working Group on place-based approaches to tackling inequality, which included representatives from the Scottish Government, the Development Trusts Association Scotland, What Works Scotland and Scotland's Regeneration Forum.

The Scottish Government has explained the rationale for place-based working:

> "Many of the effective solutions to the complex challenges we face [...] lie locally. The best ideas and most effective solutions will often come from those with the most direct experience of the issue at hand – that is, users of services and frontline workers."[4]

However, despite most place-based approaches operating with a similar set of common principles, including putting communities at the heart of the activities, taking a holistic, territorial (not sectoral) approach to local action, and seeking to embed effective approaches by utilising mainstream resources and community assets, evidence on their impacts remains limited.

Place-based policy is a term which is often used in this context too. While place-based working or place-based approaches is a term used to describe a particular way of working in places, place-based policy refers to the supporting framework for this local activity. This might be in the form of a flexible framework which can be tailored to local specificities and which encourages and facilitates both horizontal (i.e. cross policy sector) and vertical (i.e. across governance levels) working, which includes the full involvement of local communities.[5]

Extending the evidence base

Considerable economic and social differences between rural places are well-known and recent evidence suggests that inequalities between people and places continues to exist.[6] In response, place-based approaches are happening across Scotland, ranging from small localities to much larger areas.

Five questions are considered in this report:

1. How are place-based approaches being applied in rural areas and small towns?
2. What are the lived experiences where place-based approaches exist?
3. What success factors can be associated with place-based approaches?
4. What are the key challenges to implementing place-based approaches?
5. How can policy interventions further support place-based approaches?

[4] Scottish Government (2011) Renewing Scotland's Public Services: Priorities for Reform in Response to the Christie Commission, Scottish Government, Edinburgh (September), p.10.
[5] For more discussion of place-based policy, please see: Atterton and Glass (2021) Place-based policies and the future of rural Scotland, Working Paper from RESAS Research Deliverable 3.4.2 Place-based policy and its implications for policy and service delivery (August).
[6] Hopkins, J. and Copus, A. (2018). Can we measure wellbeing at the community scale? Identifying indicators for Scotland. RESAS Research Deliverable 3.4.2. Place-based policy and service delivery.

To answer these, we examined the experiences of people in five case studies:

Case study 1 - Tackling the climate emergency in Callander
Case study 2 – Strengthening Communities in the Western Isles
Case study 3 – A Heart for Duns: the changing role of a local development trust
Case study 4 – Partnerships for place-based policy: lessons from Initiative at the Edge
Case study 5 – Land reform policy and transformational community change

The common findings across the case studies suggest ways in which policies and services can be better shaped to tackle economic and social differences between places, while also delivering positive outcomes.

2 Case studies of place-based approaches

This section provides summaries of the five case studies. Full case study reports can be found in the report Case Study Annexes.

Case study 1 - Tackling the climate emergency in Callander

Context and approach
This case study examines the key drivers of community action on climate change in Callander and how policy supports/limits action.
The findings are based on interviews, document review and policy analysis.

Place-based approaches in the community
Local action focusses on: improved access to public transport; reducing carbon emissions in local buildings; reducing plastic consumption; a locally-run visitor centre; employment of a part-time Town Co-ordinator by the Callander Community Development Trust; widening the range of community funding sources (e.g. community hydro); taking greater control over local assets (e.g. a woodland, town car parks and a church).

Successes
Callander has a proactive and innovative community, as well as high levels of social capital. The Callander Action Plan guides most of the community's activity, supporting collaboration between local organisations to deliver community needs. The Town Co-ordinator plays an important role in facilitating conversations between local groups and the local authority/other agencies.

Challenges
Each community organisation has its own aims, which tend to focus on community and place rather than the climate or natural environment. Local people involved in climate-related projects are aware of local policy (the community action plan) but are less engaged with regional and national climate policy. Reasons include: unclear guidance from national schemes; lack of development funding for staff time; spending requirements that can cause disparities between the availability of funds locally and community expectations.

Lessons for policy
A community action plan is a statement of the needs and aspirations of a community and it can underpin how funding is distributed among local institutions. Communities need support from the local authority to develop an action plan, in a way that enhances communication between the community and the local authority. The primary motivation for community action is often not climate change – self-sufficiency and control of assets are the main priorities in this case. Supporting communities to take control of assets is likely to lead to more community-based climate action.

Read the full case study in Case Study Annex 1.

Case study 2 – Strengthening Communities in the Western Isles

Context and approach
This case study examines how place-based interventions have been used to address place-based challenges in the Western Isles (in Lewis specifically). The focus is on interventions facilitated by the 'Strengthening Communities' programme, run by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) to address issues in 'fragile areas'. The analysis is based on interviews with a range of community members, HIE employees and members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP).

Place-based development and knowledge
Crofting and land ownership, community land trusts (CLTs), and renewable energy affect development dynamics in Lewis. HIE offers local support to communities seeking to buy land or assets, along with an Account Management programme, which offers financial and other assistance to CLTs and social enterprises. A crucial part of HIE's involvement is to support the development of a plan that will enable a CLT to deliver its objectives. HIE is supporting the process of land reform in Lewis, as well as distributing Scottish Government and European funds.

Successes
Strengthening Communities has increased the competence and capacity of the communities it works with, by enabling communities to operate more autonomously. This increased autonomy is specifically through community access to assets and land. The process has been facilitated through CLTs working in localities.

Challenges
Institutions in the CPP are radically different in terms of their scale and power dynamics, and the demands set by their respective funding streams. HIE can only support CLTs that are able to demonstrate a basic capacity for economic growth (which not all can). There is a risk that promoting autonomy in some communities may be to the detriment of less empowered communities, which may lead to disparities within Lewis. The ability and capacity of HIE to tailor its offering towards local needs has been increasingly curtailed and this likely to worsen following the Covid-19 pandemic and Brexit.

Lessons for policy
The success of Strengthening Communities is due to a culturally and politically supportive environment that enables actors working at different levels of governance to come together and facilitate working across policy sectors.

Read the full case study in Case Study Annex 2.

Case study 3 – A Heart for Duns: the changing role of a local development trust

Context and approach

Duns is a small town in the district of Berwickshire in the Scottish Borders. Manufacturing and education are important for local employment, though many jobs are relatively low paid. The town centre remains relatively vibrant, despite the decline of some public and private sector services in recent years. This case study examines the role of local development trust, A Heart for Duns (AHFD), in managing a local hall and supporting the community in other ways. The analysis is based on interviews with local people.

Place-based experiences

AHFD was set up to manage the Volunteer Hall in Duns town centre. In 2017, AHFD was awarded funding from the Scottish Land Fund to support the purchase of the hall and transform it into a community hub with office space focused on provision of services for non-profit groups. AHFD's work has expanded substantially, and they now provide advice and information to local people on a range of topics, and support many local events/projects. Volunteers have had to adapt and re-orientate their activities even further during the pandemic. They are regarded as the local 'anchor organisation'.

Successes

Owning the hall has been central to the success of AHFD as this gives the organisation asset-based financial security. The availability of the office units has also been critical to bringing third sector partners and their range of service users into the building and hence making more people locally aware of AHFD and what they do. AFHD has been able to reorientate its activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, with an Action Group set up to support local residents. The group has built good partnerships with a number of other local organisations, and those involved are proactive with a 'can-do' attitude.

Challenges

The organisation has become increasingly stretched as volunteers are drawn into ever more activities, and there is an expectation that this will continue to increase in future. Having paid staff has made a difference to what the Trust can achieve but there are concerns around the extent to which staff time is used to apply for additional funds for salaries, rather than delivering activities. Scottish Borders Council is perceived as centralised and distant, and largely absent from local activities; for some, this has positive implications too, giving AHFD and others freedom to act locally.

Lessons for policy

Organisations like AHFD are delivering a range of services to 'fill gaps' in public and private and voluntary sector provision. Collaboration and partnership working are key to getting things done locally – with people being key assets as much as buildings/land. Support is needed to develop stronger partnership working at the local level, as well as to strengthen genuine, balanced working relationships between national/regional levels and groups doing local, place-based working (like AHFD). Long-term, secure investment is needed by groups like AHFD to fund staff who can deliver locally-appropriate activities.

Read the full case study in Case Study Annex 3.

Case study 4 – Partnership working for place-based policy: lessons from Initiative at the Edge

Context and approach
The Initiative at the Edge (IatE) was a partnership programme established in 1998 that enabled community groups to work with the assistance of a dedicated local development officer, alongside agencies and local authorities. This case study is based on written evaluations of the programme (carried out in 2001 and 2007) and interviews in 2020 with three stakeholders who were active at the time of IatE.

Place-based policy framework
IatE was designed to empower communities in some of Scotland's most remote and fragile areas, to identify their needs for area regeneration, consider what actions might be appropriate and develop relevant projects in partnership with public sector agencies. Eight pilot areas were designated in 1998, and a further 10 areas were designated in 2004. One of the most distinctive features of IatE was that there was no central source of funding and its success depended overwhelmingly on refocusing support already given by public sector agencies, working in partnership with community groups within the designated IatE areas.

Successes
IatE actively encouraged communities to articulate the needs of their area, across a broad spectrum of issues that went beyond the remit of specific funding programmes. The dedicated support of a local development officer enabled a flexible, community-led approach. Seedcorn funding was also available to assist development planning. In those local authorities with well-developed arrangements, IatE worked well and actively addressed the needs of fragile areas.

Challenges
There was a lack of direction and strategic management at the national level. The success of IatE was heavily dependent on the community planning arrangements that were intended to be the main implementation mechanisms. In those local authorities with less-developed arrangements, there were more significant implementation problems. Awareness of the programme among key public sector providers did not grow as much as it should have, considering it ran for over a decade. Momentum was lost in the IatE areas after the formal IatE designation was lost.

Lessons for policy
The future of IatE depended on a change in the level of commitment of the key agencies involved in the programme at all levels. Without more in the way of strategic direction and focussed attention from key agencies, regeneration and community development in the IatE areas was unlikely to be secured.

Read the full case study in Case Study Annex 4.

Case study 5 – Land reform policy and transformational community change

Context and approach
This case study examines the influence of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 provisions for engaging communities in decisions related to land, and other measures that influence how land ownership and land use influence place-based communities. The analysis is based on a longitudinal study of six privately-owned estates and the rural communities adjacent to/on each estate (between 2009 and 2020).

Place-based approaches to land reform
A key change over the past decade is the provision of services directly by community organisations and the ownership of land and other assets through which to provide community benefit. The formalisation of community groups, although most largely run by volunteers, could be seen to indicate a shift in community empowerment over time in the case studies. In the case studies, there were examples of purchases being readily negotiated with private estates supportive of land sales to the community. In two case studies, land has been transferred to the community (or for a community development) at no cost, and rental windows have been agreed (i.e. land rents are paused until the community group have raised income).

Successes
The influence of land reform-related policies and Government support, not least the Scottish Land Fund, have led to transformational changes in the case studies. The ability to acquire land for community use has facilitated the development of key local services and businesses.

Challenges
The private landowners and land managers who have contributed to this case study have strongly emphasised their perception of contradictory policy messages and goals from the Scottish Government and associated government organisations, e.g. NatureScot, the Scottish Land Commission, etc, as well as local authorities and National Park authorities. The interviewees assert that these contradictions and the increase in bureaucracy associated with land management are a result of a lack of knowledge on the part of policymakers and a prejudice by the Scottish Government to the private land management community.

Lessons for policy
Relationships built up between the private landowner (or a landowner's representative) can be disrupted or lost through transitions (e.g. through succession/sale of the estate) that can in turn risk positive engagement between private estates and rural communities.

Read the full case study in Case Study Annex 5.

3 Key themes

The case studies highlight three key themes relevant to the experiences of people implementing local place-based approaches. These relate to how place-based approaches can enable:

1. Community and institutional capacity-building
2. Community ownership or management of land and assets
3. Links between actors and different levels and geographies of governance/policy

3.1 Community and institutional capacity building

Community capacity building is key to place-based approaches to ensure that local people are fully involved in decision-making and activities[7]. Across the case studies, developing and supporting community capacity was a central feature of place-based working. In Callander, this was evident in the commitment of individuals and small groups to get involved in climate change mitigation projects. In Duns, the successful work of those involved in 'A Heart for Duns' (AHFD) led to volunteers taking part in a broad range of community activities, events and tasks on a variety of topics, though engaging with some groups in the town was still challenging, including the private sector, young people and the most disadvantaged.

Both the Strengthening Communities programme and Initiative at the Edge include (or included) building capacity within their core objectives, recognising that the practical way to strengthen local institutions is to provide community and circumstance-appropriate funding to local organisations. By enabling communities to operate more autonomously, the Strengthening Communities programme has increased the competences and capacities of the communities it works with. This has been particularly important in terms of fostering profitability of community organisations to ensure their continued existence. For those CLTs that were 'account managed' by HIE, there were considerable benefits from grant funding, guidance on external funding, etc. that they would not have received otherwise.

Formal support for communities to develop strategic plans to address their needs is also important for building local capacity and collective action. Stirling Council provides important, optional support to communities wishing to develop an action plan, as part of their commitment to Community Planning. In Callander, many of those who have interacted with the Community Action Plan have also interacted with the town's institutional frameworks, including the Community Council and the Callander Community Development Trust. Within Initiative at the Edge, supporting community members to develop a plan and then implement that plan in partnership with all interested parties, led to collective action to address common problems. In Duns, AHFD is emerging as the community 'anchor

[7] See What Works Scotland (2017) 'How can place-based approaches be useful in rural Scotland?'

organisation' which is ambitious and keen to develop a vision for the town but, importantly, one which has support and buy-in from other community groups.

On the privately-owned rural estates within the land reform case study, there has been a shift in activity related to the maintenance, development and initiation of new community development companies, trusts and other constituted organisations. The formalisation of community groups, although most largely run by volunteers, could be seen to indicate a shift in community empowerment (i.e. through building capacity and confidence to tackle substantial projects).

Key limitations to capacity building within the case studies include differences in scale and power dynamics within Community Planning Partnerships. For example, for communities in the Strengthening Communities case study, centralised funding sometimes presents an issue if spending at the organisational level tends to be prioritised over collaborative, strategic planning to deliver local outcomes. For example, the perceived centralisation of financial resource in Inverness was seen as curtailing the ability of HIE to tailor its support towards local needs.

Another limitation was related to local people engaged in place-based approaches having the skills to engage with higher-level policy or funding, or even to be aware of and understand this policy context and/or the funding that is available. In Callander, there was a reliance on older/retired professionals with pre-existing knowledge, resources and networks, to make these connections between the local and regional/national level; in Duns, a few key individuals played this linking role too. In communities where local residents do not have these skills, engagement will be more challenging.

3.2 Community ownership or management of land and assets

The Scottish Government's Programme for Government in 2017-18 recognised the importance of place-based assets in rural Scotland[8]. There is also the ongoing commitment to land reform and the community ownership and management of land to address issues related to fairness and inequality. Constituted community groups with robust governance mechanisms are a prerequisite to eligibility for applications to funding that has been made available from the Scottish Government and other charitable funding organisations for community development, including asset-based community development.

In the case studies, opportunities to own and/or manage local assets are important dimensions of local empowerment. Within the Strengthening Communities case study, HIE played a critical role in supporting the community purchase of the Galson Estate in Lewis.

[8] See Scottish Government (2017) A Nation with Ambition: The Government's Programme for Scotland 2017-18, Scottish Government: Edinburgh (September), p.63.

The buyout was followed by HIE part-financing office construction, and community account management through the programme was fundamental in reaching the current stage of community development. In Callander, where there is currently no central hub/hall, the community aspires to own assets to open up more spaces for place-based working. Currently in the process of acquiring a woodland and a church, it became apparent that control of local assets and a more certain financial future are underpinning motivations from which other outcomes fall. In the case of Callander, these other outcomes relate to climate action. In Duns, AHFD's ownership of the Volunteer Hall provides a strong foundation for its engagement in a wide range of activities locally.

3.3 Links between actors and different levels of governance/policy

Key to successful place-based policies are the relationships between the national and regional levels, and groups and activities 'doing place-based working' at local level. This has been recognised in the recent announcement by the UK Government of three place-based funds for places across the UK[9]. All three funds emphasise the role of local stakeholders – and particularly local authorities – in identifying priorities and building collaborative and partnership-based projects to tackle those priorities.

Place-based policy analysis has demonstrated that improved outcomes for people and better use of resources can be achieved "when local services are planned and delivered through effective place-based partnership and integrated service provision"[10]. However, the strength of working relationships between the national, regional and local levels was an issue discussed by interviewees in Duns who felt that these relationships could be much stronger and better for mutual benefit. There was a similar situation in Callander where, despite the high level of local capacity and skills, interviewees felt there is a disconnect between community groups and local authorities. Those involved in climate-related projects in Callander also noted a lack of local engagement with national and regional climate policy.

Initiative at the Edge recognised the importance of partnership agreements that span local, regional and national levels to make the best use of the skills and resources within private, public and voluntary sectors. One of the central features of Initiative at the Edge was to ensure that communities in Scotland's most remote and fragile areas were able to engage effectively with public sector agencies and articulate their needs. The hope was that the mainstream providers of local services would be able to prioritise delivery accordingly and, where appropriate, reflect this in what happened on the ground.

[9] Including: the Levelling Up Fund, the Community Renewal Fund and the Community Ownership Funds. See Atterton, J. and Glass, J. (2021) 'Place-based policies and the future of rural Scotland' for more detail.

[10] See Scottish Government (2011) Renewing Scotland's Public Services: Priorities for Reform in Response to the Christie Commission, Scottish Government, Edinburgh (September), p. 10.

4 Learning points for place-based policy

The OECD published its 'New Rural Policy' report in 2017[11]. The report argues that: "policies must take into account the specific characteristics of each rural region, evaluating accessibility, amenities and assets, human and social capital, underlying geography and other salient factors. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions." The case studies analysed in this report illustrate these differences between rural communities and their respective approaches to place-based working. However, they also illustrate common experiences of success and challenges.

Place-based policy is about more than ensuring that policies are sensitive to local circumstances and can be tailored. It is also about cross-sectoral working at national level to take a territorial not a siloed sectoral approach – the OECD suggests 'policy packages' might be a good way of supporting local development work, but that national policy-makers may require support to coordinate more effectively. National and regional level policy-makers (including local authorities) are critical in ensuring that this tailoring, combined with holistic thinking, happen nationally and regionally and can then be adopted at local level too. More attention paid to rural areas and issues at national level may help to encourage such holistic, territorial thinking, leading to wider learning for non-rural areas.

The OECD report also notes that there are challenges for national governments in facilitating the bottom-up approach which is key to place-based working. With this in mind, this section presents four key learning points for those working in national government on place-based policy[12].

1. **Long-term, flexible investment in place-based approaches is needed to ensure the delivery of solutions rooted in community needs and local action.**

The case studies highlight how place-based, community organisations are delivering a range of services to 'fill gaps' in public and private sector provision. Financial support is needed to develop stronger partnership working at the local level, as well as strengthen genuine, trust-based working relationships between national/regional levels and groups doing local, place-based working. The importance of local development officers or similar cannot be understated as they play a key role in facilitating these important, place-based relationships locally, but also in acting as bridges between different levels/geographies of policy and governance. For example, the local development officer could play a role in gathering information on the package of policies that apply to their particular area on a particular

[11] OECD (2017). New Rural Policy: Linking up for growth.

[12] Another Working Paper from this project entitled "Place-based policies and the future of rural Scotland" discusses these issues in more detail. This is available online (Link to be added once published)

theme (e.g. net zero, health and social care, etc.), and in communicating information about local peoples' lived experiences to policy-makers at national and regional 'levels'. The latter would require the officer to undertake meaningful engagement with communities, beyond 'simple' consultation. However, long-term, secure funding for these types of posts is limited.

2. **Communities need to be able to operate with a degree of autonomy to increase competence and capacity at the local level.**

The case studies illustrate several benefits of a proactive and politically supportive approach to enabling local autonomy and encouraging governance to operate at multiple levels across different sectors. Support to develop strategic plans at the community level enable communities to make a statement of the needs and aspirations of a place, and importantly, build support in the design and delivery of that statement both locally and extra-locally. Such a plan can then be used to underpin how funding is distributed among local institutions. The case studies illustrate how communities benefited from support to develop action plans (or similar), in a way that enhances communication between the community and the local authority or other key agencies.

3. **This local autonomy needs support from national/regional levels and over the long-term, by transferring resources and working in equal partnership across governance levels.**

The case studies about Initiative at the Edge and Strengthening Communities illustrate the benefits of a high level of commitment and strategic direction from within key agencies in relation to supporting local, place-based approaches. Long-term working relationships between actors in agencies and communities in places have been repeatedly shown in the case studies to have benefits (or, the lack of such relationships has been a barrier to success). For communities that have had to 'get on and just do' their place-based working without these supportive relationships there is a sense that having such relationships would be/have been beneficial. There are also opportunities to strengthen relationships between the private sector and communities, as illustrated by the positive engagement between private estates and rural communities in the land reform case study.

4. **There is a need for mechanisms by which the key features and requirements of national and regional policy are translated into something tangible and relevant at the local level.**

Complex regional and national policy documentation can be hard to understand and apply within community-level projects. Challenges also arise when national/regional funds must be spent in certain ways, which may not always complement local action/needs. Policy and funding mechanisms can therefore have a strong influence over what community activity takes place, and initiatives that the community would like to pursue may not fit well with

current policy or funding. While it is understandable that there are specific requirements around how funding is used, the restrictions mean that communities that wish to be active are forced to do what the funding allows, rather than what they believe is important and necessary within their own community. In this context, there is a risk that motivated community actors will be disenfranchised, and that community action will diminish.

Flexible policy and financial support would go a long way in enhancing community activity based around a community's specific needs, rather than those dictated by certain funding pools. In a time when rural community challenges cannot be separated out by discipline or sector, there needs to be some way to allow communities to address challenges through cross-cutting action which is rooted in the needs and shape of the community in question. This type of approach would also ensure that policy connects more powerfully with different lived experiences of place[13].

The following four practical mechanisms would help to address the above challenges:

1. **Simple translation of policy documents** into formats accessible to community groups (e.g. summary of opportunities / requirements) –a text document, or something more creative to act as an initial 'hook' e.g. an infographic / whiteboard format – to let people know policy exists and then provide a way for them to get the depth of information they need, without any confusing language / excess information.
2. **A policy contact** assigned to local authority areas whose role it is to specifically communicate on policy issues and act as that 'translator' (something like this was in place for Callander, but not for everywhere).
3. **Community knowledge groups** formed to work together to share their experiences and understanding (this would also require someone from local authority level or higher to ensure that shared experiences and knowledge stay within the bounds of what the policy actually sets out).
4. **Training events** for interested community members to learn about how policy is made and then a focus on the current relevant policy – an opportunity to break down the block text and unpick what the policy allows / requires. This would benefit from being promoted to members of society who have not had previous funding / policy experience, to decrease the gap between those who have this experience from their own personal context, and those who are keen to act in their community but don't know where to start (the session could be general - 'breaking through policy' and could be designed for people who want to get started in community action).

[13] As recommended by Majevadia, J. (2017) Where we live now: An approach to policy and growth that is centred on place, British Academy Policy Briefing (January).

Case study annexes

The full reports of each case study are included below.

Case study 1 - Tackling the climate emergency in Callander

Case study 2 – Strengthening Communities in the Western Isles

Case study 3 – A Heart for Duns: the changing role of a local development trust

Case study 4 – Partnerships for place-based policy: lessons from Initiative at the Edge

Case study 5 – Land reform policy and transformational community change

Case study 1: Tackling the climate emergency in Callander

Taking a place-based approach to the tackling the climate emergency: Callander

By **Carly Maynard**

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Rural living is often considered in terms of the increased pressures it places on climatic change, compared to urban living (such as increased private vehicle use, inefficient domestic heating, agricultural activity, etc.). Conversely, this case study considers the ways in which a rural community has contributed to mitigating and/or adapting to climate change impacts. The focus is on how policy from a range of levels influences success in community climate action – including both how policy has shaped and is shaping activities, as well as how policy may be designed to facilitate activities which reduce climatic impacts and increase resilience.

The case study has been built around three key research questions:

1. What are the key drivers for place-based, community action on climate change in Callander?
2. What activities or initiatives have been / are being developed within the community that may help mitigate or adapt to climate change?
3. What role does policy play in enhancing or challenging these activities?

Many of Scotland's rural communities have undertaken projects and initiatives that have some bearing on climate change impacts and/or resilience. However, these often constitute one project per community. In Callander, there are multiple projects at varying stages (including a hydro scheme, a climate change-focused landscape experience and community awareness-raising initiatives) and a broad mix of community groups engaged in climate action (including the Community Development Trust, the high school, leisure centre and motivated individuals).

A combination of interviews, document review and policy analysis were undertaken to address the research questions. The research took place between February and September 2020. Five interviews were conducted and included discussions with community members who have taken part in climate-related initiatives, community leaders (including from the Community Development Trust and the Community Council), and regional and national level practitioners with roles relevant to community climate change action. The content of these

interviews is coded C1-C5 in the analysis below. Where interviews could not be arranged, relevant project reports and local documentation were analysed to gather contextual detail about projects and the overall findings from all sources were interpreted in the context of national and regional policy frameworks. The research was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and 2020 lockdowns, therefore data collection was carried out remotely, by phone or online.

Callander was chosen as the case study location, in-part, because of its diverse range of locally instigated climate-related projects which exist over a variety of scales and levels of impact. This section introduces the key projects that were identified through the case study research. Climate-related community projects include:

Completed

- Callander Community Hydro Scheme
- Callander and Climate Change
- McLaren Community Leisure Centre Climate Change Initiative
- Flood resilience group (now exists informally)

Ongoing / Prospective

- Acquisition of woodland asset (Coilhollan Wood)
- Callander Landscape Partnership
- Callander: Climate and Community
- Single Use Plastics group
- Callander Youth Project: building
- Second Hydro scheme

Context

Callander is a small town situated on the eastern boundary of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park (LLTNP) and within the county of Stirlingshire (Ward 1: Trossachs and Teith). It comes under the jurisdiction of the LLTNP Authority for planning and development but is also within the wider remit of Stirlingshire Council's governance for aspects such as education.

Demographics

The population of the town in the 2011 census was 3,077[14]. Between 2001 and 2011, the population increased by 6%. Callander is the main settlement within the Trossachs and Teith Ward of the National Park and constitutes roughly one quarter of the whole population of the ward[15]. The population is relatively well-distributed in terms of age, with 30% in the 45-64 age group, 25% in the 65+ group, 21% aged 25-44, and 24% aged 0-24[16]. However, despite this good distribution, interviewees referred to the ageing population of the town, and described it as a location attractive to retiring professionals.

There is a good distribution of employment types, with 21% in professional or managerial roles, 31% in white-collar and administrative and around 24% in each of skilled manual and

[14] See https://incallander.co.uk/callander_cap_2017web.pdf
[15] See https://www.citypopulation.de/en/uk/scotland/wards/stirling/S13003115__trossachs_and_teith/
[16] See https://www.usp.scot/Town?mainTownName=callander

un-skilled manual roles. The most reported roles in the categories are accommodation, retail, manufacturing, health and education. The town has a high proportion of homes in private ownership (71%) and most households (66%) are occupied either by individuals or couples without children. According to the Scottish Index of Deprivation[17], the western fringes of the town sit in the 10th decile, indicating very low levels of deprivation (with particularly high scores in employment, health education and housing access). The central and eastern areas are in the 5th decile and a section in the east-centre is in the 4th decile, indicating higher levels of deprivation than elsewhere in the town (and scoring particularly low in terms of income and crime levels).

The town is considered to be 'interdependent to independent' according to the Understanding Scottish Places data (based on 2011 census results), which means that it has a good number of amenities within the locality and supports a number of jobs, while some people commute out of the town for work. The primary commuter destinations are Stirling and Glasgow, with some commuters travelling to other neighbouring towns, and Edinburgh. There are sufficient services such as a secondary school (with around 600 pupils), shops, and GPs / dentists to shift the town towards the 'independent' category, meaning that for these services the town does not rely heavily on external locations. Between 2001 and 2011, there was a 14% increase in housing provision and there are current plans for further developments[18].

Geography

Situated on the Highland Boundary Fault[19], where the contrasting landscapes of the highlands and lowlands of Scotland meet, Callander has a diverse landscape which influences many aspects of life in the town. Geological activity has resulted in numerous elements of geological interest in and around the town, such as eskers and moraine banks. The town itself sits within a narrow valley, bounded by the River Teith valley in the south and Callander Crags to the north which funnel the water of the River Teith down through a constrained channel which features several waterfalls. The Falls of Leny is an example of a particularly constrained section of sandstone and mudstone, that was of particular interest in the Victorian era and brought visitors from Glasgow and further afield to the area. Combined with Callander's location and reputation as the 'gateway to the highlands'[20], there has been a strong tourism economy in the town for many decades. The river in the town is prone to flooding and areas of common land have been inundated in recent years. The topography has also constrained the formation of the town's boundaries, leading to development of a

[17] See https://simd.scot/#/simd2020/BTTTFTT/14/-4.2096/56.2381/
[18] See https://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/Callander-Landscape-Capacity-Study.pdf
[19] See https://www.edinburghgeolsoc.org/downloads/CCDT_GeodiversityTrail_web.pdf
[20] See https://www.visitscotland.com/info/towns-villages/callander-p235441

ribbon-shaped settlement. This can cause issues for connectivity for residents and visitors to the town, and presents challenges for accessing external areas. The closest urban centre is Stirling around 16 miles away, with Glasgow (35 miles) and Edinburgh (50 miles) further afield. The larger town of Dunblane, where the nearest railway station is located, is around 11 miles from Callander, however, there is currently no bus service between Callander and Dunblane: travellers need to go via Stirling, which has its own train station.

Local institutional and policy context

Callander has two key community organisations and links with Stirling Council and the LLTNP Authority. *Callander Community Council* (CCC) is set up by the local authority (Stirling Council) and has 14 elected councillors from the local population. It coordinates on a range of community issues, supports initiatives and communicates between residents and groups like Stirling Council and the LLTNP Authority. Responsibilities include commenting on planning applications, representing residents' views at council meetings and administering funds from initiatives such as the Callander Community Hydro Scheme and the Airtricity fund.

The *Callander Community Development Trust* (CCDT) is a charitable organisation that enables projects that benefit the community. One of the major projects realised by the CCDT is the Callander Community Hydro Scheme (CCDT owns the company which was set up to build the Hydro Scheme) which generates renewable energy (and subsequently revenue) which is fed back in to community projects and initiatives. The CCDT is made up of a board of elected members, along with regular members from the local community. The CCDT feeds into a number of community groups such as Greener Callander and Callander's Countryside.

Callander Partnership (CP) is an 'umbrella' group[21] consisting of a collaboration between: CCC; CCDT; Callander Youth Project Trust; McLaren High School; Callander Enterprise and elected representatives from the LLTNP Authority and Stirling Council (at Councillor, MSP and MP levels). The partnership has been established to bring together representatives from the key organisations listed above with the primary goal of "*improvement of Callander as a place to work, live and visit*"[22]. This includes promoting Callander as a vibrant rural community, making best use of assets for development, coordinating activities and initiatives for development, and supporting community involvement in decision-making.

The *Callander Action Plan* (CAP) is a plan developed by the community and revised on a five-year basis. It is not owned by one single organisation but the CP oversees the strands which lead to overall implementation of the plan[23] and the CCDT works with the CCC to implement

[21] See http://minutes.stirling.gov.uk/pdfs/scouncil/Reports/SC20090625Item16CallanderISP.pdf
[22] See http://minutes.stirling.gov.uk/pdfs/scouncil/Reports/SC20090625Item16CallanderISP.pdf see 3.7
[23] See https://incallander.co.uk/ccc_cap

individual elements. Implementations of the CAP comes under the remit of the Town Coordinator.

The *Callander Landscape Partnership* is one of the most important collaborations in terms of climatic and environmental issues with multiple partners operating at a range of scales, including CCC; CCDT; Drumardoch Estate; Forestry and Land Scotland; LLTNP Authority; NatureScot and Stirling Council.

Local service provision

Callander has several local services such as GP and dental services (although no hospital), an active high school community (McLaren High School), a primary school, the McLaren Community Leisure Centre, and several local businesses, shops and small supermarkets. The town hosts a number of events through the year, such as the Callander Jazz & Blues Festival, Summer and Winter Fests, cinema screenings (at the Hostel) and has attractions including a golf club, trekking centre, museum, distillery and a local newspaper.

The interviewees described several gaps and changes in local service provision:

- *Transport:* Access to transport within and beyond Callander was generally described by as being insufficient. It was noted by C3 that bus service provision has reduced in the past ten years (thus increasing reliance on private transport) and also that young people making decisions about study options are often forced to either leave the area or abandon plans for higher / further education due to the difficulty in accessing urban areas such as Glasgow. C2 commented on the link between the need for visitors to the area to use private transport, and the impacts on local emissions. It was noted that a bus service, the 'Trossachs Trundler' used to provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to access the surrounding countryside by public transport using a smaller than normal bus (diesel powered). That service no longer exists and a gap in provision from Callander to the neighbouring tourist attraction of Loch Katrine was named specifically. However, the Community Council is looking to find a replacement (although finding this challenging due to the requirement for an electric-powered vehicle which will be able to cope with the surrounding topography).

- *Visit Scotland:* The Visit Scotland-run tourist information centre closed in February 2019, but the community has re-opened the building as a locally-run visitor information centre. The initiative has been set up by CCC, CCDT and the Sir Walter Scott Steamship Trust (from neighbouring Loch Katrine), with support from the LLTNP Authority, Visit Scotland and Stirling Council. The centre, operated by community volunteers and Loch Katrine employees, reported hosting 20,000 visitors in its first year

(2019) and was prepared to run its second season in 2020, although this was curtailed due to the Coronavirus pandemic[24].

— *Town Coordinator*: Since 2013, Callander Community Development Trust employs a Town Coordinator on a part-time basis. The funding sources for this role have changed over time, beginning with the Forth Valley & Lomond LEADER project, People and Communities Fund (Scottish Government) and LLTNP Authority. Since 2017, the post has been funded by the People & Communities Fund, Callander Community Hydro Fund (via the CCDT) and the LLTNP Authority. The Town Coordinator facilitates implementation of the CAP and the role was created in response to the identification of a need for support to oversee and coordinate community activities and aspirations. Specific duties include advising on funding applications, connecting project groups and publicising the town[25]. In 2020, the Town Coordinator has played a key role in engaging and coordinating the community response to Covid-19 and its related impacts.

— *Community funding sources:* In recent years, the community has focused on generating its own income and internal funding sources. The Callander Community Hydro project generates revenue by providing power to the national grid. The funds are donated to the CCDT, which then allocates the funds to community applicants, usually based on projects that meet with the aims of the CAP. The Airtricity fund comes from payments made to communities around the Braes of Doune windfarm. Callander receives around £12,000 a year from this fund. There are specific regulations about what this fund can be used for, but it is distributed by CCC. Funds from the hydro scheme are likely to increase in the next 3-5 years as the loans for the scheme will be fully paid off, while funds from the SSE windfarm will be paid to the community only for another 9 years (C2).

— *Community-owned assets:* The community, motivated by a desire to be more self-sufficient and have greater control over its own resources, is currently in the process of acquiring ownership of a range of assets. These include the Coilhollan Woodland, town car parks and St Kessogh's church (C1).

Place-based policy in Callander

Based on discussion with the five interviewees in this study, place-based policy for Callander appears to be limited. The most influential policy that exists is the Community Action Plan, which underpins many of the institutional structures within the town (e.g. it determines how funding is distributed to the community and guides the role of the Town Coordinator). The

[24] See https://incallander.co.uk/visitorcentre
[25] See https://incallander.co.uk/ccdt_towncoordinator

CAP is a statement of the needs and aspirations of the community. CAPs are an optional policy for development and ownership by the local community. However, the Local Authority (Stirling Council) provides support for those communities wishing to develop one[26], as part of the Community Engagement Team's commitment to Community Planning[27].

The current CAP (2017-2022) is focused around five key themes of: Community facilities and entertainment; Environment and sustainability; Infrastructure & transport; Local economy; and Outdoor capital. Climate and/or environment have appeared in the three most recent action plans, although stated goals tend to be based on requirements for outdoor activities, litter reduction, local food production, etc. rather than directly on the climate change crisis itself. In the 2007-2011 plan, goals such as improving transport, composting and biomass options, and solar energy generation are cited, but are listed under the aim for Callander to be an 'eco-friendly' place, without mentioning the term 'climate'. It is noted within the current CAP, that younger members of the community have similar concerns and hopes to the rest of the community, but that their top priorities are different, and focus on amenities such as transport and a vibrant town centre, as well as provision for outdoor activity, the issue of flooding, and the prospect of Callander becoming an eco-town[28].

There are also several institutional frameworks at the place scale, which have their own primary aims. These include the Community Council, the Development Trust and the Community Partnership, as outlined above. All these organisations are focused on community and place development rather than climate or environment. However, Callander's strength appears to lie within its *social capital*. There are numerous community groups and engaged individuals undertaking many projects within the town. Many of these projects have some connection to, or impact on, climate change, but not all were primarily motivated by the climate change issue. Indeed, the primary motivator for many of the town's initiatives was stated as self-sufficiency and control of their own assets – with a view to enhancing overall resilience. The importance of the local endogenous momentum, how this is characterised and local engagement with policy is addressed in the following sections.

Lived experiences and implications in Callander

The endogenous capacity for action within Callander is high and most of its projects are driven by the commitment of individuals or small groups. Many of these have interacted with the key piece of place-based policy (the CAP) in some way and have also interacted with the town's institutional frameworks (e.g. the CCC and the CCDT). The community-owned

[26] See https://www.stirling.gov.uk/community-leisure/community-planning/local-community-planning/
[27] See https://www.stirling.gov.uk/community-leisure/community-planning/single-outcome-agreement/
[28] See https://incallander.co.uk/callander_cap_2017web.pdf page 9

hydro scheme's funding policy is to use the revenue to support local projects that facilitate fulfilment of the CAP's objectives and is managed by the CCDT. Based on the interview responses, it was apparent that those involved in climate-related projects in Callander were aware of and engaged with the CAP, but were less engaged with other policies, e.g. those which exist at the national or regional levels. Many participants did not voluntarily refer to policy when discussing their projects, and when prompted, they frequently referred to the challenges that policy created.

Most references were made in relation to issues of funding, for instance:

- Unclear guidance from the Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) in 2009/10 regarding requirement for a detailed community carbon footprint, which led to additional work for the project team (C3)
- The availability of capital funding, but lack of funding for person time, from national funding sources (C1 & C4)
- Complexity of regional and national level documentation, leading to difficulty in interpreting and applying policy to community-level projects – this relates to funding but also general requirements of policy, funding calls, applications, etc. (C3 & C4)
- Requirement for funds committed to the community to be spent in specific ways (e.g. from Airtricity fund), causing disparity between fund distribution and community expectations / needs (C4)

Where national and regional policy did feature was in conversations with those who operated at the boundary of the community and the regional scale, and often with reference to policies which facilitate the enhancement of community resilience, such as the Community Right to Buy (C1 and C4, with specific reference to Coilhollan Wood and the town's car parks). Despite efforts to facilitate community action, e.g. policy such as the Community Empowerment Act (Scotland) 2015 and the Community Right to Buy as part of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016, interviewees reported difficulties presented in acquiring or leasing land, which were related to the requirements of existing landowners (a specific example was the need for the CCDT to prove their existence as a community organisation before being allowed to buy or lease land for the hydro scheme (C1)).

The key legacies of the climate-related projects are varied and feed in to achieving the CAP's aims to different degrees (see Table A A). Given the relatively light focus of the CAP on climate change specifically, the projects which were most successful in terms of climate action are not necessarily the ones which tie in most closely with the CAP's aims. What is important to note here is that for the community, it is resilience and self-sufficiency that are the primary motivators. The 2017-2022 CAP states "a sustainable future for Callander" in its Vision Statement, but this is presented in the context of living, working, economy, tourism, partnerships and community empowerment: indicating an understanding of sustainability which encompasses more than the physical environment.

TABLE A KEY CLIMATE-RELATED PROJECTS AND LINKS TO CALLANDER ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

Project	Key outcomes	Links to CAP objectives
Community hydro scheme	- Funds for community - Renewable energy generation	Generation of renewable energy, and funds for the community (2012-2017 CAP) Community control of assets and facilities (2017- 2022 CAP; Priority 1.5)
Callander and Climate Change and McLaren Leisure Centre climate project	- CO_2 emissions reductions in community - Awareness raising of climate change and need for behaviour change – paved way for future projects	CCF Funding and improve environmental performance of leisure centre (2012-2017 CAP) Improve transport links ((2017- 2022 CAP; Priority 3.1 – objective remains even though project completed in 2012)
Plastic-free Callander	- Reduce plastic consumption and waste in the town (visitors and residents)	Focus on improved natural environment and eco-town by young people, according to the 2017-2022 CAP
Landscape Partnership	- Various, including enhanced quality of life (outdoor access); tourism appeal; conservation; community engagement	Improve access to outdoors, including restoration of key sites and pathway development / signage (2012-2017 CAP) Community control of assets and facilities (2017- 2022 CAP; Priority 1.5) Support funding and implementation of Landscape Partnership projects (2017-2022 CAP; Priority 2.3) Tourism (& associated economic) development (2017-2022 CAP; Priority 5.3) Providing & maintaining outdoor activities (2017-2022 CAP; Priority 5.1)
Callander Youth Project	- Energy efficiency - Visitor awareness raising	Tourism (& associated economic) development (2017-2022 CAP; Priority 5.3)
Resilience Group	- Various: general community network and resilience to events such as flooding and pandemic	Flood action group set up to provide support to residents affected by flooding (2012-2017 CAP) Development of Callander Resilience Plan for emergencies (2017- 2022 CAP; Priority 1.4)
Acquisition of assets e.g. Coilhollan Wood	- Greater control of management of local area	Community control of assets and facilities (2017- 2022 CAP; Priority 1.5) Tourism (& associated economic) development (2017-2022 CAP; Priority 5.3)

Connectivity of multi-scalar policies

This case study reveals four key points in relation to place-based policy and community climate change action:

1. There is a limit to the extent to which national policy filters down to community groups, and facilitation of this would be welcomed by community representatives.
2. There is room for enhanced communication across scales.
3. Legacy and impact of community projects could be enhanced through formalised facilitation and policy interpretation.
4. At community level, challenges are considered holistically rather than individually (e.g. a project to reduce carbon emissions may in fact focus on outcomes around resilience, empowerment, tourism, employment, environment, etc.).

Each of these points are considered in turn below.

1. National policy impact at community level

Policy and legislation relevant to community action on climate change exists at the national level (Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009; Programme for Government 2019-20; Climate Change Adaptation Programme) and regional level (LLTNP Authority Development & Partnership Plans; Stirling Council's Climate Emergency declaration; Climate Ready Stirling). Although some of these policies lead to funding being available for community-level action on climate change (e.g. CCF on behalf of SG[29]), much of the essence of the policy does not filter down to the community level because it is inaccessible in terms of language, format, requirements, etc (see Table B).

[29] See https://www.keepscotlandbeautiful.org/sustainability-climate-change/climate-challenge-fund/

TABLE B POLICY AND OTHER RELATED INITIATIVES RELEVANT TO CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION IN CALLANDER

Bold text denotes policy / initiatives mentioned by community-level interviewees

	National	Regional	Local
Specific to climate change & environment	**Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009** SG Climate Change Adaptation programme Heat Networks Bill **Keep Scotland Beautiful & Climate Challenge Fund** Community Climate Hubs (new initiative) Scottish 'Green New Deal' (focus on green finance)	Climate Ready Stirling LLT Educational Resource around Biodiversity and Climate Change Stirling Council Declaration of Climate Emergency Stirling Council Climate Conversations (some took place as part of Callander & CC project) LLTNPA Trees & Woodland Strategy (sections on CC and Community Empowerment) Forth Flood Risk Management Plan (specific section on Callander) Stirling sustainable Development Strategy	**Callander Community Cation Plan** **Callander Partnership (local, but with links to Stirling Council and LLTNPA)**
Other relevant, or climate change as part of broader remit	Programme for Government 2019-20 Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, 2015 (inc. National Outcomes; Community Planning and **Community Right to Buy** Land) Local Governance Review (inc. conversation on 'Democracy Matters') The Place Principle (which is linked to the National Performance Framework – which sets out the National Outcomes) National Transport Strategy (significant focus on climate action)	LLT NPA Partnership Plan Callander Landscape Study for Capacity Development (sustainable housing element): initiated by LLT NPA LLT Callander South Masterplan Loch Lomond Strategic Future Routes Stirling Local Outcome Improvement Plan (replaces the Single Outcome Agreement) LLT Local Development Plan (Section on Low Carbon Policy) Stirling Local Transport Strategy (section on Active Travel)	Community Planning Partnerships (linked to national: Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act, 2015

There is a need for a mechanism by which the key requirements of policy are translated into something tangible at the local level (C4). Multiple interviewees commented on the

challenges faced by community groups in interpreting national policy requirements, when participants do not have experience (e.g. through their own professional roles) with such documents. Understanding the language used, drawing out salient points and negotiating with governance and funding at the regional and national levels were cited as examples of where this challenge is most common. Despite the national (and to a lesser degree regional) policy on the issue, climate change itself does not feature heavily in the local priorities identified through the CAP. Rather, it is incorporated within wider community-based goals such as resilience.

The inaccessibility of policy has a divisive effect in that it hinders many members of society from following a drive to take local action, while supporting success of those members of society who have training or experience of dealing with policy (this issue is not unique to Callander e.g. it is reflected upon in the government's evaluation of the LEADER process[30]). As noted by C4, such people often sit within a specific demographic (older/retired, professional, affluent), while others who do not have relevant knowledge, resources and networks to draw from are excluded. Successful projects (particularly ones lasting more than a couple of years, or 'follow-on projects': C5) rely on the efforts of 'community catalysts' (C4): members of the community with the drive *and* the resources to effectively translate an idea into a funded project. This potentially guides community projects to primarily follow the goals and aspirations of the privileged demographic. C2 demonstrated how good connections with the National Park Authority and Scottish Government had facilitated them in advancing their project; while C3 stated that lack of business knowledge and networks limited the scale and impact of their project. This translates into an inability of policy to have impact on broader cross-sections of society.

2. Communication across scales

In addition to formal policy being accessible at the local level, there was also recognition of an opportunity for enhanced communication between and across levels. C3 identified a lack of communication between national / regional level initiatives, and the activities taking place within the community. There was specific reference made to national organisations and the local council implementing energy efficiency initiatives, despite a community group having been granted CCF funding to do the same thing at the same time. This was not only an ineffective use of resources but undermined some of the work already carried out by the community project team. As mentioned previously, community catalysts are rare and action which would deter them from future commitment to the place should be avoided.

Reference to resilience building within the community was made by many of the interviewees, as well as the CAP document and online community vision statements. The

[30] LEADER 2014-2020 Process Evaluation (page 37): https://www.gov.scot/publications/process-evaluation-leader-2014-2020/pages/7/

community in Callander is pro-active, successful and innovative in this respect but the case study has identified that a lack of consistency in support from the regional level is felt when issues are not pursued in a timely or thorough manner. This was attributed to frequent staff turnover in governance organisations and a resulting disconnect between regional members of staff in mediation roles, and the passions and causes in which the local community are so heavily invested. Examples of this challenge were reported in many of the interviews, having implications at the individual project level, e.g. a delay in communication between the National Park and Transport Scotland is reported to have delayed the re-building of a bridge in the town, a development which the community organisations are keen to progress. However, there are also issues that the community can identify and champion, but which cannot be progressed without substantial commitment from regional and national level organisations. The primary example of this is the requirement in the community for a more sustainable transport system, which will allow residents to move away from private car use and connect better with surrounding areas (and also have non-environmental benefits such as retaining residents in the town who wish to study, etc.). Such a challenge requires collaboration between the local residents of Callander, planning and transport managers, and also the neighbouring rural and urban areas.

Despite this disconnect, there were examples provided of good connectivity between the place-based and regional levels of governance, e.g. the Landscape Partnership. It is, therefore, important to identify what promotes these successful relationships. One aspect identified by C2 and C3 is the existence of an active network between the two levels. The CCC and CCDT facilitate this to some degree, but as identified by C4 (and more generally by C5), the structure and processes of these networks are often inaccessible and their benefits may be limited to those in the community that have good connections with the CCC/CCDT or who are familiar with such formats of working. To extend this sphere of influence, it may be appropriate to endorse communication methods which are designed around the needs and behaviours of the community members e.g. the use of the local, volunteer-run newspaper, communications placed in shops and schools, the presence of a central hub, etc. It was noted in two of the interviews that despite its many assets, facilities and its active community, the town lacks a centralised meeting space such as a town hall. The physical manifestation of a community hub may well serve to channel communication to a common point too.

The community has a number of pro-active members and many interest groups – but there was less evidence of effective communication between those groups – the interviews demonstrated an awareness of groups within the community, but there was limited discussion of any overlap or mutual support – there is the opportunity here for a coordinating role to synthesise the efforts of these groups and facilitate learning between them (the Town Coordinator role is designed to do this, but it is a part time role and there is

a need for more support of this kind: C4). This can also be extended to the communities surrounding Callander. I4 noted that local network forums have previously worked well to enhance communication, knowledge and resource sharing between Callander and its neighbours, and that the current efforts by the LLTNP Authority to reinstate these or similar networks would be welcomed. It would also facilitate communication across levels and perhaps up the governance hierarchy.

3. Enhancing impact

Some of the earlier community projects reported successes at the time of project completion. However, they also noted a subsequent lack of data or knowledge on their ongoing legacy or reach, as well as knowledge of some project elements which started out successfully but then ceased to operate. In most cases, when asked about what would facilitate the longevity of the project impacts, responses included funds for follow-on projects (which are reportedly more difficult to obtain than initial 'starter' funds: C3; C4; C5); monitoring and data collection about project impacts (also require funding as well as ongoing roles supporting the project: normally such roles end as project funding ends) and uptake and ownership by the community (C3). C2 noted that the Callander Landscape Partnership has a strong focus on establishing and supporting the project's legacy now, while the project is still running. Support for other projects (e.g. through knowledge sharing or mentorship) would help other community groups to integrate this into their own plans.

All the projects studied demonstrated their reach in terms of having an impact for community members. Some (e.g. Callander and Climate Change and the McLaren Leisure Centre climate project) had specific goals in raising awareness and encouraging behaviour change for all groups of society; making specific efforts to connect with a wide range of socio-economic groups. Others (e.g. the hydro scheme) have a significant impact in terms of reaching members of the community who aim to pursue priorities from the CAP (through providing funding for related projects) but have limited reach in terms of climate action. Overall, community-based schemes reported good levels of engagement and participation, but the nature of the engagement is largely influenced by the project's primary objective (which is often not climate change).

It was noted that policy and funding mechanisms can have a strong influence over what community activity takes place (C4). Some of the initiatives that the community would like to pursue do not fit well with current policy or funding focus, for example, the community has expressed an interest in a second hydro scheme development, but the extensive assessments required, coupled with the reduction and subsequent cancellation of Feed In Tariffs, mean that this would be much less economically viable than the existing scheme. Another example is that of the Active Transport funding which is managed by Sustrans – any active transport initiative needs to fit with the interests and requirements of this funder. While it is

understandable that there are specific requirements around how funding is used (it is made available to meet pre-defined purposes after all), the restrictions do mean that communities which wish to be active are forced to do what the funding allows, rather than what they believe is important and necessary within their own community. In this context, there is a risk that community catalysts will be disenfranchised, and that community action will diminish. Returning to making the case for a role within the community that translates and filters policy and funding requirements: this may help in allowing communities to make quicker decisions over where they wish to invest their time and resources.

4. Holistic challenges

While basing this case study around community level action on climate change, it has become apparent that for many community members, challenges are not addressed in such a specific manner. Rather, the community seems to have a wider goal: that of resilience and self-sufficiency in the face of a broad range of stressors (e.g. a sustainable economy, population retainment, community diversity, quality of life, connectivity, and environmental change). This wider vision is then pursued through the lens of the policy and funding mechanisms available to motivated community members. It was noted by C5 that, on a national scale, funding for community efforts is often limited to a small number of options, one of the main ones being Climate Challenge Funding. So while many of Callander's projects were not primarily driven by the need for climate action, they were moulded to fit funding and policy mechanisms which were geared towards climate action, and had climate-facing benefits, but also had wider resilience-based benefits identified by the project instigators. In addition to this, many of the interviewees were conscious of the conflict between some of their primary aims (e.g. income for the town, promotion of a tourism economy) and the impact that this would have on the climate as well as the local environment. This creates a need for place-based guidance on how to enhance the economy in a sustainable manner. Policy that supports *sustainable* local development is necessary to support community groups in achieving their needs at a range of scales e.g. the personal need for employment, services and networks, linked to the broader need (in both spatial and temporal terms) for a healthy environment in which to live.

The case for place-based policy which enhances community empowerment

Perspectives from Callander

The challenges for community climate change action identified in this case study mirror some of those identified through the Scottish Government's 'Democracy Matters'

conversations on community participation in decision-making[31]: poor communication; tokenistic engagement; lack of representation, unwelcoming structures. This presents an opportunity for a structural and communication-based reform that will allow community willingness and capacity to be realised into action and productivity.

By developing policy which will facilitate community activity based around community priorities, there is the opportunity to enhance a number of the place-based policy characteristics identified by Atterton (2017)[32]: i) building on the *assets* of local people and engaging them as assets rather than "passive recipients of services"; ii) tackling issues in a holistic manner (e.g. across council-level organisational departments) will provide a level of *focus* which is beneficial to the community. There is already evidence that the community can take the role of deliverer, coming from the Callander community adoption of the visitor centre. This action will enhance community control over how the town is marketed to visitors, but the community would benefit from enhanced support in this kind of endeavour, rather than having to 'step-in' when a public or private sector service is removed.

Following the rationales of place-based policy, as set out by What Works Scotland (Atterton, 2017, p.13), a more holistic perspective on community action (which is asset based rather than issue based), would facilitate activities which deliver multi-faceted benefits. For instance, the community taking control of assets and processes in response to a perceived lack of commitment from regional organisations fulfils the *civic* rationale. In taking control of these assets, the community benefits from the range of advantages they bring and can take ownership due to their identification with a place (as well as also taking on responsibility for the assets). Similarly, the multi-layered benefits of community-focused policy would allow action and outputs to be *joined-up* and have the *socio-economic* benefit of efficiency of input.

Existing place-based policy which is influencing community activity without direct reference to climate change is likely to have indirect impacts on the climate issue. For instance, land reform and community empowerment policies on community asset building mean that the people of Callander are able to acquire assets which can then be managed in environmentally sustainable ways, as well as having more inward-facing benefits such as revenue generation and tourism appeal. In keeping with the OECD narrative on fulfilling untapped potential of underdeveloped regions, this would help to shift the focus from needs and deficits of a community, to one which promotes assets and capacity (physical, economic and social) (Atterton, 2017, p.19).

[31] See https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-governance-review-analysis-responses-democracy-matters/ p.7

[32] Atterton, J. (2017) Place-based policy approaches and rural Scotland, Working Paper from RESAS Research Deliverable 3.4.2 Place-based policy and its implications for policy and service delivery.

Unlike many rural areas, Callander is able to boast a high level of social capacity and community engagement. However, it is important that this endogenous capacity is not taken for granted or assumed to be unshakeable. Small economic or social changes in the area could have the potential to undermine its current strong social capacity and therefore, place-based policy which nurtures, facilitates and grounds local action and networks is essential. The formal roles offered by the CCC and the well-established work of the CCDT go some way to supporting this, but it has been reported in this case study and more broadly (C5) that there is potential for an enhanced flow of information and support between such groups and the general population of the area. In response to this, policy which supports and stabilises community networks would be welcomed.

National level perspectives

From a Scotland-wide perspective, there is an opportunity currently for a comprehensive re-design of community governance systems. Elliot[33] states that an empowered community is one which is "*confident, resilient, energetic and independent… well networked… has a high degree of social capital … is confident enough to imagine a better future for itself, and is in a position to take control of that future … has the breadth of vision to be able to enlist others and other agencies in helping it to deliver its ambitions*." For Callander, most of these properties are evident, but struggles have been identified in obtaining financial and institutional support within and beyond the community. C5 noted that, based on experience of working with climate action groups in numerous Scottish locations, similar challenges exist and cited some of the key barriers to community-level climate action: a disconnect between community groups and local authorities or formal community representation groups (e.g. community councils); lack of locally governed funding to allow *long-term, relevant* projects; disconnection between people and the natural environment and disenfranchised communities as a result of tokenistic consultations.

Conversely, system shocks such as the Covid-19 pandemic/lockdowns and flood events, mean that many communities have seen the emergence of mutual support networks, which are based on community willing and ubiquitous and accessible resources such as group communication tools (e.g. WhatsApp). Flexible policy which enables financial and political support of such social resources would go a long way in enhancing community activity based around a community's specific needs, rather than those dictated by certain funding pools (e.g. Climate Challenge Fund). In a time when rural community challenges cannot be separated out by discipline or sector (e.g. climate change, local business), there needs to be some way to allow communities to address their myriad challenges through cross-cutting action which is rooted in the needs and shape of the community in question.

[33] Elliot, A. (2014) Advice Paper 14-08 Community Empowerment and Capacity Building, Royal Society Of Edinburgh, Edinburgh.

This presents the need for a democracy which is built from the bottom up, one where we use facilitated, deliberative processes to identify community needs (and community conflicts), which should then be used to guide the role of local authority and national-level governance. In such a scenario, local and national level governance would be more accessible to individuals and communities, with greater numbers of local representatives per number of residents (cf. models e.g. the Finnish municipality system – at which level much of the country's democratic decision-making takes place). In doing this, there is the opportunity to engage local, experiential knowledge on the needs of communities, and subsequently build funding and support systems which are flexible enough to address those needs. As identified by the Scottish Communities Climate Action Network, climate action needs to be built on a foundation of robust demographic and political structures which are designed to empower local communities[34].

A total change in governance structure is clearly not something that can be achieved easily or quickly. Therefore, the driver for this change may come from exemplars set out by active communities. Using the disruption and change from the current situation (Covid-19 pandemic), there is the opportunity to start creating newly designed and organised community networks. There is evidence that this form of transition is already taking place in some areas (e.g. Dunbar[35], Aberdeen[36]), although there is scope for greater support in all contexts. This kind of support cannot be delivered as a uniform solution and all communities (and sub-communities) have varying needs (e.g. small town vs remote rural or retirement-attraction vs diverse socio-economic profile). Therefore, financial and institutional support which allows communities to pilot this approach and *evaluates* its outcomes is essential for developing a better understanding of how locally-guided policy can be best designed.

Considering recent cuts in local authority funding which has restricted their role in facilitating communities, a re-visitation of how we value community capital is required in order to find ways to meaningfully support it. This could begin through the empowerment of local authority staff and multi-directional communication mechanisms (already voiced in an announcement by COSLA & SG[37] and being pursued through MSP Andy Wightman's Member's Bill to incorporate the European Charter of Local Self Government into Scots

[34] https://docs.google.com/document/d/1m4j7gYygyeEHrFIfdfMH7MUgDIwe5-Rb8keMYkphGvA/edit page 3
[35] https://sustainingdunbar.org/
[36] https://www.aberdeenclimateaction.org/
[37] https://www.cosla.gov.uk/news/2019/may-2019/local-governance-review-joint-statement; https://www.cosla.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0022/14665/cosla_plan_convention_2017_.pdf

Law[38]) or empowerment of rural community anchor organisations (e.g. What Works Review[39]).

Future opportunities

This case study has identified that Callander has a pro-active and innovative community and a high level of social capital. There is one important piece of place-based policy (the Callander Action Plan) which guides most of the community's activity, based on community needs, identified and published by the community. For the residents and community project leaders, policy at the regional and national scale features less in their assessment of activity, but does play a role in influencing what activity takes place (e.g. through funding foci and requirements).

Despite the high level of endogenous capacity, there is room for greater communication and engagement with the wider population of the town. Fundamentally, though, the town's activities need to be supported by some central, synthesising function which facilitates engagement in community action, removes barriers such as intangible policy documentation and funding requirements, and connects different groups at both the place and the regional scale. Table C outlines some of the key challenges and opportunities in the town, what mechanisms might help to address the challenges / opportunities and the potential benefits that these could bring. The final row looks more broadly at governance for empowering communities.

TABLE C CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PLACE-BASED POLICY AND SUPPORT IDENTIFIED WITHIN THIS CASE STUDY – WITH POTENTIAL ASSOCIATED BENEFITS OF PURSUING THE STATED OPPORTUNITIES

	Challenge / Opportunity	Requirement	Benefit
Support Framework	Requirement for projects to deliver multi-faceted outputs based on community needs	Place-based policy that strengthens and enhances social capacity	Cited benefits of placed-based policy such as joined-up action / outcomes; community ownership; resilience
	Conflict between town's needs to maintain economy and services, and broader climate / environmental aims	Place-based policy or guidance on community action that is flexible enough to account for the specific needs and capacities of the town	Multi-faceted benefits; greater awareness of the inter-connectivity of economy and environment; more opportunities for residents to participate in a way that empowers them
Knowled	A need for local understanding of policy; tangibility	A role which synthesises relevant policy and publicises its opportunities and applications	More diverse engagement from community members; better use of available funding and social

[38] https://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/116361.aspx
[39] http://whatworksscotland.ac.uk/publications/exploring-the-roles-of-community-anchor-organisations-in-public-service-reform/

			capital; better connected projects and outcomes
	Lessons 'lost' from pre-existing projects	A permanent role within the community to connect projects and knowledge acquisition together over time and space (could be related to role described above)	Better-informed project plans; community-level learning from pre-existing efforts to improve outputs of future projects; enhanced networks and communication within the community; enhanced community ownership/uptake
	Similar efforts being duplicated within and between rural areas	Network to support communication between places at the *community* level	More efficient use of funds; knowledge exchange and social learning; resilience across communities
	Lack of connectivity between regional governance and the local community	Enhanced communication with the community and regional governance organisations – through engaging means	Better understanding of community needs; more efficient use of resources and effort; better connected communities
	Limited reach of the formalised communications between the town and the regional governance networks	Varied and multiple communication methods	Greater reach of communications; shared challenges, knowledge and resources; greater and more diverse participation in community initiatives
Governance structure	Lack of connectivity between communities and local / regional / national governance; Related: 'siloed' funding and support structures	Governance structure which allows community level dialogue to influence the priorities, support and actions of the regional governance May include: — Community anchor organisations — Access to deliberation facilitators — Flexible policy and funding — Greater empowerment of local decision-making	Community-centric agenda setting; Policy and associated support systems which are reactive to community needs, variable over space and time; greater engagement of the wider community and individuals; resilience within communities that are empowered to manage their own assets and resources

Notably, rather than a need for place-based *climate* policy, there is a need for place-based connectivity or facilitation policy, and focus on processes as well as structures. This would allow the community not only to access national and regional policy on climate and environment, but also to enhance its already strong commitment to multi-benefit action and balance social needs with environmental and climate-based goals. A formalised role to bring together all these elements would make an excellent starting point here. The town already employs a town coordinator via the CCDT, and this role partially addresses these needs, thus

placing Callander in a stronger position than many of its counterparts. However, as noted by C4, there is scope for much expansion of this role.

There are also lessons to be learned here for similar communities: synthesis and coordination of effort can offer great returns on community inputs, but clear and accessible policy requirements are needed to facilitate this process and harness the potential offered by social capital and community enthusiasm. More specifically:

- A **facilitation role such as a Town Coordinator** or project advisor would help to focus attention on the work to be done rather than grappling with policy and application processes. It could also support important communication networks within and between communities
- The work of **community catalysts** needs to be valued and supported to avoid the risk of losing the momentum and cohesion that these individuals bring to a community.
- **Collaboration between community and governance level actors** would be facilitated by setting out plans of action, specific tasks for individuals and commitment to timescales. Ensuring plans are in place to deal with staff changeovers or governance structural and institutional changes will provide confidence to community action groups.
- **Funding mechanisms which support the needs and aims of a community** rather than following nationally or regionally-set objectives could lead to greater community engagement and multi-faceted outcomes. This would also be supported by a policy focus on assets rather than issues – to draw on the strengths of a community.
- **Place-based policy which supports the more strategic elements of community action** e.g. assets rather than issues, network development and socio-economic stabilisation could make substantial differences to a community's ability and willingness to take action.

Case study 2: Strengthening Communities in the Western Isles

Understanding the role of a specific place-based policy in developing Community Land Trusts to assess effective place-based rural development

By **Mags Currie, Annabel Pinker and Annie McKee**
The James Hutton Institute

This case study focuses on how place-based interventions have been implemented to address place-based challenges in the Western Isles (focusing on Lewis), specifically those that have been facilitated through Strengthening Communities, one of Highlands and Islands Enterprise's (HIE) core priorities.

Strengthening Communities is aimed at building community capacity and fostering sustainable growth; it preceded and helped to shape the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 and the ongoing land reform agenda. Strengthening Communities aims to build capacity within communities by providing community and circumstance-appropriate funding to local organisations. Such support is designed to foster profitability and independence of such organisations, enabling them to then facilitate further local social and economic initiatives.

The aim of this case study is to highlight how Strengthening Communities has facilitated effective place-based rural development by specifically focusing on:

- the community land buy-out aspect of the programme;
- the nature of the support that HIE provides; and
- the effectiveness of the support provided in facilitating place-based action.

This research was carried out in summer 2018. Interviews were conducted with relevant individuals within HIE and others with experience of community planning and community land acquisitions (known as 'community buy-outs') on Lewis. This research was undertaken as part of the EU H2020 RELOCAL project.[40] A snowballing technique was used to select research participants. We conducted a total of 16 interviews, which included HIE employees,

[40] Currie M, Pinker A and Copus A (2019) Strengthening Communities on the Isle of Lewis in the Western Isles, United Kingdom. RELOCAL Case Study N° 33/33. Joensuu: University of Eastern Finland.

members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) and several different community land trusts.

Context

Around 18,500 people live on Lewis, (8,500 of those living in Stornoway). The islands are located within Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (the Western Isles Local Authority). The dominant sources of employment include the public sector, fish farming, tourism, construction and community energy, however some also leave the islands for periods of time to work (e.g. in construction or off-shore oil and gas). Population is declining in the Western Isles and is accompanied by a reduction in service provision, making it less attractive for people to move there.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar is a key driver of employment and local development in the Western Isles, and responsible for local policy development. HIE is charged with fostering an integrated approach towards economic and social sustainability in the Highlands and Islands. It was established in 1991, with its headquarters in Inverness and a local office in Stornoway.

The CPP is a statutory strategic planning body that brings together an array of local institutions in each local authority in Scotland. In the Western Isles, those organisations particularly relevant to this case study include: HIE, NHS Western Isles, the local authority, local community councils, local housing associations, and the fire service. CPPs are intended to drive public service reform and lessen inequalities in access to services in localities. Community Land Trusts (CLTs), which are constituted community bodies who own land and other property of behalf of geographical communities, are new and key local governance actors.

The following factors were considered to be fundamental in affecting the dynamics of development in the locality:

- *Crofting and land ownership*: Lewis has been greatly shaped by crofting. At the outset, crofting was organised to serve the interests of the landlords who owned the landed estates. The balance of landed power on the Western Isles began to shift in 1923, with the transfer of ownership of a portion of the estate of Lord Leverhulme, who owned South Harris and the whole of Lewis at the time. 28,000 hectares of land surrounding Stornoway was transferred to the control of islanders, and a community organisation, the Stornoway Trust, was established to administer it. A wave of bids for community land ownership began following a precedent set by a 'community buy-out' in Assynt. On the Western Isles, the first buy-out took place on North Harris in 2003, followed by: South Uist (2006), Galson (2007), West Harris (2010), the Pairc and Carloway estates (2015), and most recently, the Barvas Estate (2016). Currently, 72% of Lewis is under community ownership, greater than anywhere else in Scotland.

— *Community Land Trusts (CLTs):* The reasons for why buyouts have taken place differ and have included instance where plans to break-up estates were to the detriment of locals (Assynt), and to provide empowerment, autonomy, and protection for crofting communities who might otherwise have been subject to landowner-led developments that to some were viewed as disadvantageous. In all the buyout cases on Lewis, a CLT has been formed to administer estate land after the buyout has happened. Having gained control over the land, the CLTs began to demonstrate the viability of deploying community ownership as a basis for tackling place-based issues with locally-devised responses. The processes of transformation due to land buy-outs are still under way however, due to their ability to capitalise on renewable energy projects, the CLTs that formed earlier on have become more economically self-sustaining than newer CLTs. HIE note that the current funding climate is more challenging now than it was previously for CLTs.

— *Renewable energy*: This has been one of the key factors influencing an uneven development trajectory of CLTs. Trusts that were formed earlier to 2015 were able to take advantage of the government subsidies available for energy schemes to install various infrastructures, particularly wind turbines. The funds arising from these projects have brought these Trusts a degree of autonomy, enabling them to cover core staff costs and push forward some of their own initiatives, whilst also attracting further financial support through their capacity to match-fund incoming grants. Newer Trusts, lacking the income from renewable energy schemes have not been able to generate funds in the same way. This point is crucial when considering the place-based effects of community land buyout processes: the impacts of renewable energy developments have not been evenly distributed between localities.

Community Planning Partnerships: relationships and institutional changes between partners

During the 1990s, the local authority had established a large team of community development staff, located across Lewis. When HIE was planning its own programme of work, the possibility of the local authority and HIE working together to implement a joint community development programme was discussed to prevent perceived duplication of effort. Ultimately, however, this did not happen and whilst HIE went ahead with its programme, the local authority withdrew the majority most of its community-based staff. HIE and the local authority meet now to share information on potential future projects. Such dynamics serve to highlight the complexities and challenges of enabling collaboration between different institutional bodies that takes place with the CPP. Feelings about the CPP were mixed amongst the interviewees. For example, it was stated that the partners

constituting the CPP already adequately communicated with each other and that it was unnecessary to formalise the links between them.

It was also found that different institutions within the CPP were radically different in terms of scale and dynamics of power. The local authority was responsible not only to the Western Isles, and the Health Board, like the HIE office, was heavily orientated towards fulfilling obligations set higher up their respective institutional chains elsewhere in Scotland and more widely in the UK. Similarly, each institution was subject to the demands set by their different funding streams, requiring them to spend money, for example, within specific timeframes – with the effect that, by necessity, taking action as an individual organisation tended to be prioritised over collaborative strategic planning replacing a more relational and locally-grounded mode of organisational practice that had been perceived to be in decline over the previous ten years. One interviewee expressed concern that perceived focalising (or centralising) of resources in Inverness has led to a diminution of funds for more remote Highland locations, including Lewis.

Autonomy of account managed community land trusts

Interviewees discussed that whilst HIE remained crucial to the survival of CLTs in some cases, HIE's ability and capacity to tailor its offering towards local needs had been increasingly curtailed. This was evidenced by perceived uneven practices of account management. Trust staff often reported receiving vastly different answers, or being subject to different bureaucratic requirements, depending on the staff within HIE with whom they communicated. Some interviewees reported that they were unsure as to why some projects were funded and others not, or as to why certain CLTs were taken into account management and others not. The logic of HIE decision-making was not always clear or well-understood by those outside the organisation.

Nonetheless, it was clear that those CLTs that were within account managed Trusts benefitted considerably, through HIE grant funding, as well as guidance and orientation on external funding that they would not otherwise have been privy to. Receipt of such funding was constituted as a near guarantee for continuity of growth by CLTs.

Service provision inequalities

Strengthening Communities is administered in areas that are termed by HIE as "fragile areas". This term was used to characterise areas that:

- had a declining population;
- were under-represented by young people;
- had a lack of economic opportunities;
- had below-average income levels;
- had problems with service provision, such as transport; and

— had other issues reflecting their geographical location.

Strengthening Communities aims to address these issues. Interviewees often associated the more resilient communities on Lewis with the presence of vibrant populations and strong service provision.

Predominantly, when discussing spatial inequalities of service provision, interviewees discussed these inequalities within Lewis or the Western Isles, rather than in comparison to other areas of Scotland or the UK. However, comparisons were also drawn between the Western Isles and the Northern Isles. For example, one interviewee observed that where Shetland has benefitted considerably from the North Sea oil and gas industry, the Western Isles is known primarily for its export of a meat-based delicacy: *"They have black gold and we have black pudding"*.

HIE interviewees sometimes referred to inequalities between Lewis and the mainland, when seeking to justify the support that HIE provided to Lewis. For example, one HIE staff member stated that, "*If you take the Highlands and Islands region and GDP over the last 10 years, GDP has risen by 14% regionally. At the same time, the Outer Hebrides [Western Isles] has fallen 14%...well, that actually means that if you took the Outer Hebrides out of that, regionally they've done much better than 14%. So [the Western Isles are] pulling the region down*."

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) was felt to be difficult to apply and use meaningfully in this remote rural context. Some geographical differences were noted, with the areas of Lewis of West Stornoway, Carloway and Pairc felt to be relatively more deprived; this could be measured by a higher proportion of social housing than in other areas. Access to services, such as schools and healthcare, in more remote areas was viewed as being increasingly challenging due to population decline and some parents with jobs in Stornoway electing to take their children there for the childcare prospects (e.g. Carloway's school had recently shut). Some interviewees felt a lack of service provision led communities to feel more deprived. It was also discussed that deprivation did not always appear in clusters within communities (as often occurs in urban communities). Further, interviewees commented that the building of social housing in areas of population decline as a way of maintaining fragile rural populations, could also be seen as a sign of deprivation and inequalities existing in those areas.

However, it was felt that having one secondary school in Stornoway on the island equalled out opportunities for the island's children. In fact, Stornoway was considered to benefit from centralised services that were not provided elsewhere on the island, and due to the greater availability of facilities. For example, it is the only place on Lewis to offer wrap-around childcare associated with primary school provision. To some interviewees it felt that there was a lack of local involvement in decision making over how resources were

allocated outwith Stornoway. There was thus a sense that people in some parts of the island had to fight for positive changes whilst this took place without a struggle elsewhere.

Dynamics of spatial (in)justice are also shaped by multiple interacting power relations and layers of governance that can constrain or open up possibilities for progressive action. In particular, configurations of land ownership, the distribution of common and crofting land, and opportunities for taking action on the land are critical dimensions of local empowerment on Lewis. Perceptions of spatial inequalities can also vary within different sectors of the population. For example, older adults may be spatially disadvantaged due to the absence of health and social care opportunities; children may be disadvantaged due to the absence of schools and extracurricular activities; and teenagers and young adults may be disadvantaged due to a lack of transport opportunities.

Although community land buyouts on Lewis and the establishment of CLTs have opened up possibilities for greater local autonomy in addressing local issues, and some decentralisation of power and resources to localities, the buyouts should not be perceived as leading to spatial equality *per se*. In the case of Lewis, we found that this was specifically related to whether or not the CLT had established early enough to tap into the potential of community energy; those CLTs that had been able to do so were more financially successful than those that hadn't.

How Strengthening Communities is delivered

In this case study, two streams of HIE's Strengthening Communities priority area were examined:

i. the support HIE offers to communities that are seeking to buy land and/or purchase infrastructures, such as schools, for local use; and
ii. its Account Management programme, which offers financial and other assistance to CLTs (usually after a prior land buy-out) and social enterprises to enable them to become self-sustaining.

We explored the workings of these programmes in relation to Lewis' CLTs in particular. The community assets stream offers support to groups that are looking to acquire land or buildings for their communities. Members of the community assets team act as case officers for the Scottish Land Fund. The account management (AM) stream is process where HIE enters into a relationship with a client organisation (e.g. a private business, social or community enterprise) over a sustained period to help it grow and develop its business. A social enterprise or community trust is deemed eligible AM if it is able to demonstrate social and economic growth.

Twenty-six community trusts and social enterprises were being account managed across the Western Isles in 2018. Occasionally, HIE will support the delivery of a community-wide

plan (i.e. broader support than that given to CLTs and social enterprises), referred to as CAM (Community Account Management) or AMC (account managed community). Bodies owning new assets are generally taken into AM to help them grow and achieve financial security, although there may be exceptions where development plans or growth aspirations are not in place. Once an estate becomes self-sustaining the CLT may shift its focus to wider community priorities such as service delivery, housing or environmental improvements. At this point the relationship with HIE could shift from AM to CAM if that is deemed more appropriate. It should be noted that support is not limited to AM and flexibility exists to provide one-off interventions to non-account managed clients in certain circumstances.

A crucial part of HIE's involvement is to support the development of a plan, established to identify the steps required to enable a CLT to achieve its objectives, which is produced and owned by the relevant community trust, although HIE can support the process through consultancy support or by funded a development worker. This support could include funding, specialist advice where specific expertise is required (i.e. for instance in renewable energy development), mentoring, strategic guidance and capacity building support.

National and European policy contexts

When discussing the national policy context influencing the case study locality, it is worth noting that some interviewees – specifically some of those who worked for CLTs – felt removed from both Scottish and European policy processes. For example, one CLT employee stated "*Personally I feel a bit detached from that high level…I think we are really viewing things from an island perspective, from services, from…our own local needs of retaining the population, making sure there's employment*". To many of those we interviewed, policy mattered to the extent that it empowered or enabled communities to take action that was viewed as beneficial to themselves.

CPPs emerged in all local authorities in 2003 as a replacement for Social Inclusion Partnerships, which were seen to be unable to address poor public service provision to more deprived neighbourhoods. The Christie Commission argued that CPPs had done little to tackle inequalities, and therefore the Community Empowerment (Scotland) 2015 Act includes a statutory requirement that CPPs divide their areas into smaller localities.

These recent policy developments demonstrate a proactive approach to enabling autonomy and encouraging governance to operate at multiple levels across different sectors. The Land Reform (Scotland) Acts of 2003 and 2016 also promote autonomy and a place-based approach in a bid to tackle the spatial injustices implied by the concentration of large areas of land in the hands of a small number of private landowners. The 2003 Act included provisions for the right of responsible access to land, and the right to buy land for rural and crofting communities. Specifically relevant to this case study as it enables communities the ability to buy private land is, Part 2 of the 2003 Act, the 'community right-

to-buy' provides geographical communities with populations of up to 10,000 people to register an interest in land and permits them to utilise a pre-emptive right-to-buy if the landowner puts the registered land on the market. Furthermore, crofting communities are allowed to purchase crofting land at any time, regardless of whether it is has been put on the market or not, due to powers in Part 3 of the 2003 Act. The 2016 Act progressed the 2003 Act by including provisions for regulations relating to Part 5, the 'right to buy land to further sustainable development'. When these powers are enforced it is anticipated that compulsory land sales to community bodies will be implemented, where it is considered that the transfer of ownership is assessed as to further the achievement of sustainable development in relation to land, and where maintaining the status quo is considered to be 'harmful' to the local community and public interest. The Scottish Land Fund, which is financed by the Scottish Government and administered by a partnership of the National Lottery Community Fund and HIE, provides funding to communities aspiring to buy land. Each community can apply for grants of up to £1 million to support its purchase, and the fund covers practical as well as financial support.

HIE are specifically facilitating many of these policies by supporting communities and services and supporting the process of land reform on Lewis. More broadly, HIE delivers the Scottish Government's Economic Strategy through distributing Scottish Government funds and, to some extent, HIE is funded through European Structural Investment Funds. The Scottish Government is the managing authority for these funds in Scotland – specifically, the European Rural Development Fund and the European Social Fund – which it distributes to ESIF partners, of which HIE is one. Thus, to some extent these processes are facilitated by European money.

Forms of place-based knowledge: common understanding of problems, joint learning and shared network capital

CPPs are a formalised mechanism to instigate both joint learning and best practice. HIE's inclusion on the Western Isles CPP allows them to collaborate with different governing actors, translating and improving top-down and bottom-up contexts and methods of delivery that best meet needs and target spatial inequalities and injustices.

Many of the interviewees described themselves as 'wearing multiple hats', by which they meant that they often occupied multiple roles at different levels of governance. For example, when they were interviewed, they stated that they represented both their organisation and a community, and, on occasion, a Trust and the CPP too.

We propose that because many of our interviewees are actors in a number of different contexts and/or organisations and are thus engaged in multiple roles, this means that they understand spatial inequalities and injustices in more complex ways than they would if this was not the case. Furthermore, a cultural environment existed, with evidence of both

bridging and bonding social capital, that helped to facilitate the success of Strengthening Communities. The annual meeting of the Community Landowners Network meeting that takes place between HIE-managed community landowners enables them to share best-practice and facilitate joint learning, as well as the exchange of experience understanding regarding successful approaches, supporting their wider application. This meeting was originally facilitated by HIE but has recently been taken over by the CLTs themselves, which suggests that a process for joint learning has been fostered and that the meeting has gained longer-term buy-in and resilience from the CLTs.

Our interviews revealed that Trusts have mechanisms for assessing the impact of their work which differ to those used by HIE. On the whole, assessment of impact was related to progress and the benchmark of what was happening before the community buy-outs. Trusts often compared their progress to other Trusts, with those who perceived themselves to be less successful usually attributing this to a lack of access to community-owned renewable energy.

HIE, through the Strengthening Communities team, were found to be highly responsive to place-based needs in the case study and the unique characteristics, dynamics, assets, social capital and human agency related to each community they worked with. This was partly attributed to HIE's long-standing investment in the region, which has been fundamental to mobilising place-based responses, through instigating and employing adaptable approaches to suit needs identified by communities over time.

Lived experience example: The Galson estate

In 2001, community members formed a steering group which intended to purchase the privately-owned Galson Estate, in north-west Lewis. The estate was owned by one family for approximately 80 years. The steering group established the Galson Estate Trust after under-taking a feasibility study and applied for grant funding to buy the estate. 80% of the required funding came from the Scottish Land Fund, with the remaining 20% from HIE. The Trust acquired the estate in January 2007. HIE's Community Assets Team supported the Galson Trust throughout the buyout process, a role emphasised as being 'absolutely critical' to the success of the buyout. Members of other Trusts pointed out that their buyouts would have been far less likely to succeed had they not benefitted from this support.

Once the Trust had purchased the estate, it entered into account management with HIE. In practice, this translated to HIE part-financing the construction of the Trust's offices as well as funding the posts of two members of staff until the organisation was able to sustain itself through revenue generated through its renewable energy scheme. Five graduate placements were also funded during various stages since the estate acquisition. HIE staff members acknowledged that those CLTs that had not been able to take advantage of

renewable energy as an economic driver faced more challenges in securing financial autonomy. HIE has, however, supported and continues to support CLTs in this position.

Account management is not guaranteed post-acquisition but HIE will engage in other ways if the CLT has ambitions to develop the asset. Representatives from the Trusts we interviewed stated that CAM was fundamental in their ability to reach their current stage of community development. CAM is flexible and place- based; it does not impose a one-size fits all solution, but it does replicate successes from elsewhere where appropriate and desired by local communities.

Key success factors and challenges

There have been a number of ways that the Strengthening Communities programme could be regarded to promote effective place-based rural development:

- It was found to increase the competences and capacities of the communities it works with by enabling communities to operate more autonomously.
- It facilitates a process of empowerment that increases autonomy and access to assets, most specifically land. In places where access and community rights to ownership of the land have improved, reversal of population and service decline has been realised.
- It answers calls by the Christie Commission about place-based solutions to challenges involving multi-levels of governance across sectors. Arguably, however, this process has been facilitated through Trusts working in localities rather than the CPP.
- It has supported the reform of a major spatial injustice – the right to land access/ownership. However, HIE can only support those Trusts that are able to demonstrate a basic capacity for economic growth, which not all can, though it should be acknowledged that communities seeking to buy assets would need to demonstrate social and/or economic sustainability to any potential funder.
- It should be noted that Strengthening Communities is located within a culturally and politically supportive environment that enables actors working at different levels of governance to come together and facilitates working across policy sectors.
- Strengthening Communities is designed around empowering actors to take possession of (and manage) previously inaccessible assets in flexible and place-specific ways, and the full benefits of such an approach are only in their early stages.

There are however some ways in which the Strengthening Communities programme may reinforce some place-based inequalities:

- Programmes such as Strengthening Communities run the risk of promoting autonomy in the more able communities to the detriment of less able communities ('more able' means communities who are empowered to take action), which may lead to place-based disparities within Lewis. Due to the relatively early stages of CLT

development on Lewis, it is not yet clear how exactly development processes will progress. The increased withdrawal of the local authority in community development processes due to austerity measures and concerns that they duplicate HIE's efforts may also result in future distributive inequalities, particularly where the local authority has been supporting communities that HIE currently does not. It is important to note that HIE is only one amongst a number of agencies working to support communities in the Western Isles with its current model of funding allocation.

— It should be noted, however, that HIE does not exist without external challenges. Specifically, austerity has, in the view of some Trust interviewees, led to some withdrawal of HIE's activities on Lewis itself, and this is likely to worsen following the Covid-19 pandemic. Brexit also poses challenges, with regards to access to previously utilised European funding mechanisms.

Case study 3: A Heart for Duns: the changing role of a local development trust

A Heart for Duns: The Changing Role of a Local Development Trust

By **Jane Atterton**
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Introduction[41]

Duns was the county town of the district of Berwickshire[42] and it is located within the Scottish Borders local authority area. The town is located approximately 25-30 minutes (15 miles) drivetime from Berwick-upon-Tweed (which is located just south of the England-Scotland border, and attracts lots of spending from Duns, particularly in terms of large supermarket shopping). The town of Kelso is approximately 16 miles away and 25-30 minute drivetime, and also has supermarket provision, and Duns is approximately 50 minutes drivetime from Galashiels, the main service centre in the Scottish Borders district. Transport linkages between places are reasonable, but there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of public transport, with one interviewee commenting: *"there are no quick routes to anywhere round here"*.

The town has always been an important agricultural centre, although employment in this sector has declined in recent years (in line with other rural areas and small towns). Although dominated by microbusinesses, Duns has a small number of key employers, including Farne Salmon (operating in the fish processing sector and employing a core workforce of approximately 600-700 people, including overseas workers from Poland and Portugal amongst other places, plus some seasonal employees in the run-up to Christmas for example), Pearsons (a builders merchant, garden centre and service provider employing 50-60 people which regularly expands into offering new services), Greenvale (processing and supplying vegetables), and Ahlstrom (involved in the manufacture and distribution of non-woven paper and fabrics). In other sectors, Berwickshire Housing Association is a significant employer with approximately 60 staff (though not all in Duns). Overall, the manufacturing

[41] The information in this section was gathered from interviews with representatives of local organisation and the Understanding Scottish Places website.
[42] This is the subject of dispute between Duns and Greenlaw.

and education sectors are particularly important for local employment, though many jobs are relatively low paid.

The town has seen the decline of a number of public and private sector services in recent years, including the closure of local bank branches and the ending of tertiary education provision in the town (with the withdrawal of Borders College) and the recent closure of a GP practice. It retains a relatively vibrant though small town centre, mostly organised around a town square, and reasonable service provision for its local population (including a day hospital, minor injuries clinic and the remaining GP practice). A new secondary school was built on the western edge of town in 2009 and the primary school is now located in the refurbished old High School building. The town is not a major tourism hub (and lacks hotel provision and enough restaurant/café space, etc.) but has recently seen the completion of a new Jim Clark Museum and it is well situated for outdoor tourism, with its relative proximity to the coast and to both the Lammermuir and Cheviot Hills.

Duns has a population of approximately 2,700 people, with a slightly higher than (Scottish) average proportion of older people. Approximately 8,500 people live in the smaller towns and rural communities surrounding the town itself. The population of Duns increased by 6% between 2001 and 2011, and 3% from 2012-2016. In terms of migration, the trend is positive (i.e. net in-migration) though pretty stable year-on-year, with a 1% net migration rate in 2011.

Part-time and self-employment are important in the area and 30% of people work locally (within 5km), with small proportions of people commuting out of the area for work, including to surrounding local places such as Eyemouth or Galashiels, or further afield to Edinburgh. Approximately 36% of local households are experiencing no deprivation, and almost 50% of local households own at least one car. Approximately 56% of local households own their home, as opposed to being in council/private rented accommodation. Duns is generally perceived as an attractive place to live to which people chose to move, and according to one interviewee, as the *"social and professional centre of Berwickshire"*. More negatively, it was commented that Duns people do not always engage strongly with one another, nor with residents of other local towns in Berwickshire or beyond in the wider Borders local authority area.

A Heart for Duns - Background

A Heart for Duns (AHFD) formally became a Development Trust (associated to the Development Trusts Association Scotland) in May 2017. Previously it was a looser grouping of (generally well networked and active) individuals mainly linked with amateur operatics and drama activity in the town. AHFD was originally set up to run the Volunteer Hall which is situated near Duns town centre. The name of the organisation was originally chosen to

represent the Hall and its role as a heart for Duns, but interviewees reflected how well it 'fits' the now broader organisation and its role across a range of activities in Duns and District.

The Hall itself was originally created as a Drill Hall for the 2nd (Berwickshire) Volunteer Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers, a unit which was formed in 1888, and was opened in 1895. Just over 100 years later the Hall passed into the ownership of the Territorial and Auxiliary Reserve Association for the Lowlands of Scotland, and then more recently to the ownership of the Lowland Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association, with management latterly undertaken by Scottish Borders Council.

In May 2016, AHFD (having become a SCIO, Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation) took over the lease of the building from the Council and were successful in securing funding from a range of sources to undertake a variety of activities to upgrade the building and host events (establishing demand was critical to secure long-term, substantial funding). In September 2017, AHFD was awarded funding totalling £206,000 from the Scottish Land Fund to support the purchase of the Hall from the MOD (officially in April 2018) and to transform it into a multi-purpose community hub. Since then, the former caretaker's flat on the site has been transformed into office space for non-profit groups (with support from National Lottery Fund) which were all full pre-pandemic (and there was a waiting list) and other refurbishment work has also been undertaken in the Hall, including updating the heating and ventilation and kitchen areas.

More recent work has been undertaken by AHFD to explore the future potential of the Hall, and in January 2020, a feasibility study and community consultation were completed (funded via the South of Scotland Economic Partnership) to inform the further development of the site.

AHFD consists of a Board of Trustees, supported by a network of sub-committees, a large pool of volunteer supporters, and part-time staff, including a Development Manager, Finance and Facilities Manager, Events and Admin Manager, a Caretaker, a Marketeer, and a temporary Climate Change officer from September 2019 to March 2020. For AHFD, *"good governance is key"* not least because of the wide range of activities the organisation is involved in:

> *"its not about the individual people, its about the organisation and what it offers, including leisure, culture, all sorts of things, but it also provides a venue to address rural isolation, loneliness, it fulfils a need for an elderly demographic with films, lunches, and the kind of things that people in a rural setting absolutely need…. And yet it has this other face which is about lobbying councillors, interacting at various levels both locally and nationally, keeping an eye on what is happening out there, and trying to reflect it back in. And its that kind of thing that has created the success of for example the U3A in Duns with 170 members, 27 groups, we had 70 people in this Hall on Monday with a*

guest speaker…. We have also created a spin out thing, the Berwickshire Learning Partnership… focusing on local employability. We were getting nowhere with tertiary education so we said let's just do this ourselves. And that's very much the kind of approach we will take. We will try and work with the statutory providers, but if they won't do it we will just get on do it ourselves. People used to rely on things being done to you, whereas nowadays we have the kind of society, they are not going to do it for you, the money and resources aren't there. So if you want things to happen you have to make it happen."

This quote demonstrates very strongly how important those involved in AHFD feel it is for the organisation to be proactive and ready to take advantage of opportunities as they arise. It also demonstrates the breadth of activities in which AHFD is involved, from delivering film nights and community lunches, to attending meetings with key regional organisations such as Scottish Borders Council.

Exploring place and the meaning of place-based policy

Interviewees discussed how to define 'local' and 'place' in Duns, as a small town with an important rural hinterland made up of smaller villages and settlements. There was recognition that these definitions are vital for encouraging local people to engage with local place-based working and with AHFD as a key organisation in those local activities. There was agreement amongst interviewees about the best scale for action being the district (i.e. Berwickshire), not the wider Scottish Borders local authority area, and Duns and its surrounding communities. One commented: *"Yes, we've given up on Borders almost, its Berwickshire that is much more meaningful, with a central hub in Duns with its hinterland."* Another commented: *"…its all about Berwickshire, because it is different from the rest of the Borders."*

Exploring interviewees' perceptions of the meaning of the term place-based policy revealed that most felt the term refers to ensuring that policy takes a place-sensitive rather than a one-size-fits-all approach. For one interviewee, place-based policy is about:

"Coventry, Berwick, Lancaster, Edinburgh… it's not about wooden spoons or something. It's about respecting the style, feel, integrity, needs, character of place… and it's like community, it can be community of place, interest, workplace, whatever. A place can be whatever is appropriate. So, the place is Duns, or Duns and district, but we are also seeing the wider place which is Berwickshire, as well. But Duns is surprisingly effective and attractive as a place."

In terms of distinguishing between place-based policy and place-based working, one interviewee commented:

> *"Place-based policy… if you're thinking about the high level, you know Government level, you're actually not then having some generic policy for regeneration, you are applying it to everywhere. Hawick isn't Duns, or Peebles, or Eyemouth, you know. But places are different so you can't really have a generic style of how you treat things. Not just a big lever that you pull and apply the same."*

Similarly, for another interviewee, place-based policy: *"…means that national policies take account of the very different geographic, social and economic issues across Scotland. Is about how they translate and work in different areas."* This interviewee went on: *"The AHFD Board has quite a wide national and international perspective. We are not parochial at all, we understand that what we do has to fit with some of the big stuff up here. We are quite tuned into research and policy. And I think that maybe differentiates us from other local organisations who do good local working but its sort of disconnected."* The latter part of this quote refers to one of the key principles of place-based policy, the importance of linking national policy frameworks with local level, place-based action.

One interviewee was slightly more dubious about the term place-based policy and felt that it was one of those terms that is fashionable but does not necessarily mean anything. They argued that:

> *"I think we overcomplicate things by language sometimes. I think dividing things into places and people… why, what does that actually mean. If its localised, locally appropriate, but then it should be anyway, we don't need a policy to tell us that… Place-based working is more meaningful, it about what can we do, what do we have locally. Its not about what we don't have but what we do have. And if we don't have it, well what am I going to do to change it. I think the place-based stuff is about empowering people. The advantage is that we're small, we might be limited, but there is an opportunity to have quite clear thinking and alliances of understanding. The downside is that personalities can get in the way."*

Activities

Since AHFD became a local development trust in May 2017 the work of the trust, even within the Volunteer Hall, has expanded substantially in scale and scope. The range of activities that take place in the Hall demonstrates this (with some of them attracting substantial numbers of people), including film nights, community lunches and many different things associated with the (very active local) University of the Third Age, including well-attended guest speaker sessions.

In addition, interviewees from AHFD commented on how much they were involved in designing and delivering a growing range of activities, events and tasks in and around Duns, including in terms of providing more general advice and information for local community

members on a whole variety of different topics, and supporting a range of local projects and events. The availability of the office units in the Volunteer Hall has been critical to bringing third sector partners and their range of service users into the building and hence making more people locally aware of AHFD and what they do.

While interviewees commented that it has sometimes been difficult to demonstrate to non-local organisations that: *"they do more than run a village hall",* local groups and local people generally see AHFD as doing significantly more than 'simply' running the Hall, and so they are often approached to do additional things. AHFD also has a group of Trustees who are strongly embedded locally in a range of other activities and groups. One interviewee commented that this 'spread' of involvement was also due to there being:

> *"a gap of governance in Duns. In fact in wider Berwickshire, which isn't unique, so we are now involved in other things that are going on. So the Community Council here is not hugely active and have no money, no resources, and few volunteers…. So we've stepped into that gap. So we are almost like an old Town Council, except we have got no statutory authority…. And we are quite mouthy, and we're also here in this landmark building."*

Interestingly it was also discussed in relation to other public sector organisations. For example, it was discussed how Berwickshire Housing Association, as a social housing provider, has been drawn into delivering a wide range of other activities to 'fill gaps' left as other public sector providers have withdrawn, both for its tenants but also for others in the wider community too. This has led to a concern that: "*"Once we get pulled into a gap, will we have to stay in it forever? Where is the line going to be drawn? Or do we go back and, painful as this would be for us, say actually this isn't our role, someone else has to do this."* For this interviewee, the Association is undertaking a lot of what could be termed 'prevention based' work to tackle challenges that become apparent to them while working 'on the ground' before they become more significant problems for the local authority or for the NHS. It was argued that these sorts of preventative interventions are actually becoming more critical (and therefore potentially more costly) as the thresholds for NHS intervention apparently become higher and waiting lists grow longer.

Returning to the growing scale and scope of activities undertaken by AHFD, this has certainly put pressure on the volunteer trustees and Board (who meet monthly) and the part-time Development Manager (a paid member of staff), who often found themselves over-stretched and fatigued. Having staff has made a big difference to the Trust and what they can achieve, but they still have concerns around the extent to which time is being taken up having to apply for funding for staff roles, rather than actually delivering activities on behalf of AHFD.

More recently, AHFD has had to reorientate its activities during the pandemic. It set up Duns Community Action Group to support residents while the Hall has had to be closed, including

by assisting with grocery shopping, collecting prescriptions, walking dogs and simply chatting to someone by phone to reduce isolation. The Group operates a phone line where people can leave a message or people can email and messages/emails are checked on a daily basis with the Group aiming to provide a response within 24 hours. There is also a Community fridge and larder (located in the Hall) where people (and local shops) can donate food they do not need for others to use and to reduce waste, and a similar 'Sentry Box' where people can donate and borrow books, DVDs, games, etc.

Several interviewees commented on the 'drivers' for local activities and the difficulty sometimes in demonstrating need when the place is regarded as being (at worst) average in terms of socio-economic performance. One interviewee talked about the need to: *"keep Duns socio-economic performance, and certainly not let it dip and therefore experience more challenges that then need to be addressed. But this is frustrating as because of its 'average-ness' it is often not the priority for attention and resources."* As one interviewee described: *"Duns has had a level of almost success, but it's only going to take one thing and it's going to go downhill quickly and we don't want that to happen."*

Building partnerships at the regional level

From the literature, key to successful place-based policies are the relationships between the national and regional levels, and the extent to which these relationships facilitate groups to undertake place-based working at local level. This was an issue discussed by interviewees in Duns who felt that these relationships could be improved for mutual benefit, particularly with tertiary education and Scottish Borders Council. There was a strong sense amongst interviewees that public authorities are perceived as being increasingly centralised and distant, both geographically and in terms of its understanding and even interest in Berwickshire generally, and Duns in particular. One reason for this disinterest was felt to be the 'average' position of Duns discussed earlier, in comparison to somewhere like Eyemouth for example, a small town on the Berwickshire coast, which has more obvious and long-standing socio-economic challenges around unemployment, poverty and alcohol and drug abuse.

Therefore, rather than there being in a close relationship with the Council as part of the context of the place-based working that AHFD is undertaking, actually for interviewees, this relationship was largely non-existent (with the exception of one or two individuals, including an elected councillor who is engaged) and certainly not perceived as being supportive. As one interviewee commented:

> *"At AHFD initially we didn't realise that we didn't have a relationship... that sounds stupid but because we were running a venue. But as we grew, we thought wait a minute, the local authority don't know what we are doing… so we met with [a local councillor] and others and they said 'oh we don't support village halls' but obviously we*

are about more than that, so at that point they didn't really understand what we do. Still, they have very little to do with what we are doing. We are not hostile to them but they are just not in evidence. I don't think they have got the staff or capacity to do much actually. And we're out on a limb and we're not a terrible problem…. And you know they are having to make cuts, so I understand, it's a kind of siege mentality. At one point they weren't allowed to come out of the office and for somewhere like the Scottish Borders that's ridiculous... so much so that members of the public and volunteers who want to be involved have to go all the way to St Boswells."

For some interviewees this lack of a strong relationship was disappointing and they were missing the local authority as part of the *"scaffolding for local place-based working"*. However, for others the lack of local authority involvement was actually a positive thing as it had created freedom and a space in which local working could take place. Indeed the disconnect and apparent lack of interest towards Duns and Berwickshire more generally was cited as a reason for AHFD volunteers taking on the Hall initially at considerable risk to themselves, including to their own reputations in the town. The lack of involvement had also avoided a situation where AHFD or other local organisations had become dependent or reliant on support and developed a culture of dependency which becomes very hard to change: *"We've tried to ensure that we are independent, not dependent on anyone for support. Being independent is really powerful but it does have a downside in that you don't have any core funding. We can make our own mistakes, we can choose to seek investment or not…."*. Another commented: *"We may not have democratic accountability but we've got freedom of action, and we can just do it, and make it happen."* More negatively, another interviewee commented that greater involvement of the public sector might actually be destabilising locally as it may encourage competition between groups, particularly for funding, and it may restrict what groups can deliver locally and the ways in which they deliver because the council will have their ways of doing things. When probed further about the lack of a (place-based policy) framework which the local authority could provide, interviewees agreed that this might be helpful as long as it wasn't restrictive and it served to facilitate and support what they wanted to do locally.

Interviewees also commented on AHFD's involvement in public sector led groups such as the Berwickshire Area Partnership, which is led by Scottish Borders Council. For one interviewee, it was simply a *"talking shop"* and he did not expect much when he attended the meetings which he perceived as very much led by the public sector with little attention paid to the community voices, and relatively poor engagement and representation from community and voluntary sector groups, including the Community Councils. Another interviewee went on to emphasise that these were not criticisms of the elected council members or indeed the council officials involved, including the chair of the Area Partnership: *"it's more about the culture, that is what we do, and it's not working but nothing seems to change. And that's an*

added frustration…So there are lots of assets to build on but there are structures and cultures mitigating against that." Examples were cited of instances where the local authority has presented a plan to communities leaving communities unwilling and unable to engage as it was controlled and designed from the top without their involvement, let alone ownership.

For interviewees from AHFD local partnership working was critical:

> *"The key aim is for a strong alliance of local organisations in Duns to get a devolved budget so that as a collective we can decide on priorities, where to invest, tap into national and local authority funding, be more flexible. But that requires a huge culture change and a lot of trust between us, as well as between the 'donating body' and the collective of local organisations, and a clear vision for what we want to do and to be able to account for all of that. And we've been here before in terms of Community Planning Partnerships. In theory they were meant to do that. But they were never really properly implemented, and never owned properly. They kind of sat between everything…. I see it time and time again but the implementation is all wrong, either because there is not enough trust from the responsible body or the people implementing it are a committee and it's never going to work. But we want the best, you know, we all live here… we want to make sure we do the right thing for Berwickshire in the long-term, not just short term for political purposes. Why can't we have a 10 or 20 year plan? Plans have to be robust but flexible. You should be judged on how far you've got to achieving it, not on changing the plan. The Treasury Green Book outlines how to do it, how to invest but they are not doing it themselves. They are not offering 10 year investment. They are not doing it themselves. 10 years is a minimum time to make changes."*

Another interviewee commented further on the tendency for the public sector still to drive the agenda and set the plan, but: "*That's never going to work. What will work is if we all collectively put our heads together and say what are we seeing and hearing, what does the data tell us, what does our history tell us, what about the intelligence in terms of a group of dedicated people, what would we see as being needed, and then we can work as an alliance of organisations to do the things that we see as being needed."* The challenges of partnership working were also recognised, including:

> *"…individuals wanting to do their own thing, to do things on their own, I think giving away control is hard for some people. A lack of convergence of values is also a challenge, they won't compromise. I think there's a culture of competition too, and that's promoted by the competitive tendering environment we live in and procurement rules but it's not supporting local employment. We need open-mindedness to doing things differently for local benefit perhaps, there might be slightly higher costs from*

that but the benefits outweigh that. That environment has to change for localism to be effective."

Building local partnerships

For interviewees, local collaborative and partnership working is key to getting things done locally. For many people locally AHFD is regarded as the strong and influential 'anchor organisation', and the group has been actively trying to build relationships with other local organisations, including four strategic partners, and the Community Council, Rotary Club, local schools, etc. for mutual benefit, sometimes as a result of being opportunistic and sometimes in a more strategic and planned way. As one interviewee commented:

"Because AHFD are approachable and understand how the networks work… I personally, my family are from here but I am an incomer and that makes for an interesting dynamic with being known locally and knowing the local area, but having useful external links."

AHFD has developed particularly good working relationships with Berwickshire Housing Association and Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service (BAVS, which was retained when the Third Sector Interface was set up in the rest of the Borders), and strategic links with other local associations and groups. These links are helped by having people on the Board at AHFD from key organisations – the common story of people in rural communities wearing multiple hats. Some of this relationship-building, particularly with the local Community Council was encouraged through a 'Democracy Matters' workshop which had been held locally as part of the Scottish Government's review of local democracy in Scotland.

Another interviewee talked about the existence of different groups in and around the town, including 'old Duns' people linked to the festival and rugby and golf clubs, and newer people who have moved in (including lots of local tradespeople and professionals), which can make local partnership-building more challenging, but not impossible. In particular, interviewees mentioned that AHFD is particularly keen to build stronger relationships with local young people (including through a local youth group and schools) and with the private sector, including through representative bodies such as a local Chamber of Commerce and large local employers such as Farne Salmon.

Interviewees were in agreement about the lack of an agreed vision for Duns for 10 years' time, but key organisations are ambitious and having that vision is critical as the basis on which to build local partnership working. It was felt that local organisations tend to do what they want and are not coordinated and do not do enough joined up thinking. This lack of a local agreed vision was blamed on the lack of governance locally, and also due to a lack of engagement and leadership from the public bodies (recognising that the vision had to come from the bottom-up). For one interviewee, what AHFD is trying to do is to: *"get the right*

people together and say what do we want for Duns?" in order to build this vision in a collaborative way. One interviewee compared the lack of local governance in Duns to the situation in rural and small town France with its strong mayors and funding for local level activities and businesses which are vital for local community resilience.

One interviewee commented on the importance of ensuring that any future vision for Duns fits within the frameworks of the local authority and beyond that, the Scottish Government (i.e. 'matching' the bottom-up with the top-down):

> *"It has to, because if you are looking at investment streams, which you have to, you have to understand what their priorities are, but you would hope that they understand enough about the country and localities that they have taken into account the needs of local areas. But you have to tailor it… you can't just chase the money. You have to be grounded and know what's needed, but also have the right words in the right order, so that the two things can actually come together. And not parachuting stuff in because there's a policy up in the Highlands that works. HIE did understand place-based policy, that is for sure, and that's the right model for them, but for down here it's not directly transferable."*

Building local resilience

AHFD interviewees raised some of the important challenges of being a group based on volunteers and the increasing demands placed on those individuals to devote more and more time to engage in an ever-growing number and range of activities. This brought concerns for the group and how it would sustain itself into the long-term. This led interviewees to note how challenging it is that much of the public sector funding is short-term in nature: *"…throwing money at something and then running away again… they fund a shiny new toy and then something else… there's no resilience in that process at all. And that's almost been public policy in the Borders… do it, touch it and then go and do something else. And short-termism is driving that."* Another interviewee added: *"… and its political short-termism, there's no sustainability in that approach at all. So things come and go and they don't have time to establish. We get a lot of white elephants."* He went on: *"… its fundamentally about trust I would suggest, and about power and having a say over what goes on. The local level is often regarded as the most junior level, which isn't the same thing."*

One interviewee gave the example of a national charity working regionally, including in the Borders but based in Edinburgh. The charity had secured funds to deliver a specific activity but had been open about saying that they will stop doing the activity once the funding runs out. For the interviewee, this was a classic, and all too often seen, example of a non-local organisation parachuting in, with no local ownership of the planned activity, and simply saying they would withdraw when there was no more money, so it was not going to be sustained. His strong preference instead, was for that investment to be devolved locally, so

that the activity could be locally designed depending on local priorities and the money locally managed:

> *"A lot of it, I have to say, is down to self-preservation of organisations, because they have to attract funding too." Some organisations have dedicated implementation support teams which is great, to put things into practice and to be that conduit from the lofty national ambition and the local planning. Where it is not command and control structure but its guidance and coordination, with agreed national and local objectives. There are good models and 10 year policies around. We have longer policies for environmental targets but not a lot else."*

For AHFD interviewees, owning the Hall is key, as it gives the trust the security of having a significant asset, but people are also key assets in terms of what can be achieved locally:

> *"great people, including in organisations like AHFD, we've got some fantastic innovations, the work of the Volunteer Hall and the Development Trust is fantastic, University of the Third Age, the volunteers we get are fantastic and the hall here is a real asset, so there are real strengths on that front…but the fact that local funding is short-term is a real challenge. We need continuity".*

There was some discussion amongst interviewees regarding the extent to which AHFD engages with the local community as part of the need to build local resilience. For some, the level of local engagement was great: *"…lots of people come to events in the Hall, they attend, they engage that way, it's important that they feel it is their place."* While other interviewees felt that AHFD could be more proactive in terms of its engagement with local community members i.e. not just relying on rather passive engagement through people coming to events. As mentioned earlier, it was also felt that engagement with particular groups in the community could be improved, including with young people, businesses and with the more disadvantaged members of the community.

Looking forward

Interviewees commented on how important it was for AHFD to look forward for new opportunities on the horizon, and to be adaptable. For example, over the last year, AHFD has had to adapt to the restrictions in place due to the Covid-19 pandemic by closing the doors of the Hall and stopping all of its many activities and groups but launching other activities, including the Community Action Group to support local residents during the pandemic.

Looking further forward, AHFD recognises it will need to undertake an increasing range of activities, particularly as public and private sector service providers withdraw, and local residents increasingly come to their doors seeking advice and information on an ever wider range of issues. The volunteers are 'up for the challenge' and bring a range of knowledge, skills and attitudes (for example towards risk) to the trust but equally recognise that they

need to recruit more younger individuals if they are to be sustainable. The emphasis is on ensuring that *"everything is for the good of Duns and District"* and that local people see them always prioritising activities on that basis. At the same time, there were often lengthy discussions within the Board of AHFD with some members being more keen to pursue the growth of activities in the Hall, while others placed their emphasis on the broader development trust type activities locally. This kind of discussion was perceived as positive with it being important to hear different viewpoints.

Developing stronger partnership relationships locally is also key and something that AHFD has placed considerable emphasis on. Local partnerships are critical to ensuring that future projects adequately identify and tackle local challenges, based on local assets and opportunities. For example, while Duns is generally regarded as being beyond comfortable daily commuting distance for major urban centres (such as Edinburgh, and particularly Newcastle), there may be opportunities to grow local employment (and the local economy) by encouraging people to move in who can work from home using digital connectivity: *"So we assume that young people have to leave Berwickshire to go and work in the city but actually they don't and how can we encourage families to come and live and work here, but also young people to stay here, they don't have to move."* Another added: *"It's actually more about attracting them back."*. This may be particularly the case post-Covid-19 pandemic as working patterns change.

At national Scottish Government level, one interviewee who was reasonably familiar with the national policy context felt that it was hugely relevant and supportive of place-based working in Scotland, particularly through recent Community Empowerment and Land Reform legislation. She emphasised the importance of being proactive and being aware of the policy context and how it could be used in support of local activities. However, that awareness is not always easy to achieve at local level as national policy isn't always accessible (in terms of both finding it and understanding it) and people locally are often too busy delivering stuff. She went on:

> *"I am not sure how much we actually engage with policy regularly, but we understand it. We have also engaged with our local MP and MSP, we get visits from them, I don't know how much they make a difference to us, but at least they know we are here. But I think its up to us to be aware of opportunities. They are never going to come knocking on our door."* However, more generally, interviewees felt strongly that we need to move away from a situation where: *"Rural is an afterthought, and not thought through at all in terms of national policymaking…"*. Interviewees particularly discussed the challenges relating to identifying and tackling rural poverty, which is often hidden in Duns as: *"…there is only say 1 or 2 people and there's not 15 of them, then its not recognised… people are so dispersed. You drive around Berwickshire and you see lots of Range Rovers so it looks like a well off place, but actually there is a whole layer of*

hidden poverty that's not visible. People are not ghettoised in sink estates as in urban areas, and that's the real challenge for us."

The availability of a sustainable, long-term funding approach for groups like AHFD was also raised as a – perhaps the - key issue, in particular to cover staff roles so that they can concentrate on delivering activities rather than constantly searching for money to cover their own salaries. Paid members of staff, even if it is only one or two, are usually critical to the long-term sustainability of groups like AHFD as more often than not they cannot rely solely on volunteers to do everything:

"It's having that significant figure who's around… obviously all of us can contribute but to have somebody who can do things…. Even if it's going to meetings and just talking." One interviewee went on: *"It comes down to money… that constant feeling of just having to battle away, with fundraising, whatever. Unfortunately the local population is not big enough to sustain the Hall so it is fragile."*

Related to this, interviewees commented on the challenge for public sector organisations: *"…to relinquish power"* to groups such as AHFD, and the parallel challenge for groups such as AHFD to fully engage with the community, as mentioned previously. For some interviewees, it was felt that AHFD perhaps did not engage enough in an active way, as much of the engagement was passive through the attendance of local community members at film screenings and other events in the Hall. In terms of future relationship building, there are also opportunities for AHFD to strengthen their relationship with the new South of Scotland Enterprise Agency.

Returning to the issue of funding, AHFD was regarded by interviewees as a critical player in the future resilience of Duns and the surrounding district. Its ownership of the Hall was seen as key to its long-term sustainability as were its people, in terms of the Board and its paid staff. What interviewees felt was needed though was more longer-term thinking and funding, including amongst public sector partners. And to support all of this local working driving towards a clear and shared vision for Duns, a simple, flexible and supportive framework from public sector partners in the Community Planning Partnership is critical, in which local organisations are respected, valued and heard. As one interviewee commented:

"We need to have a shared vision and an alignment of ideas and values and ambitions. I think we are getting there and I am excited about that. But it does take time, and that's the other thing, partnerships don't just happen. You have to make effort, you have to be prepared to have difficult discussions and compromise and prepare to be patient. And you need leadership, however that looks, someone driving that shared vision. And I think AHFD are providing that leadership and alongside that, inspiration."

Case study 4: Partnership working lessons from Initiative at the Edge

Partnership-working for place-based policy: lessons from Initiative at the Edge

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The 'Initiative at the Edge' (IatE) could be regarded as an early example of a local community development process, in which the role of public sector partners was critical. A partnership programme, IatE involved communities in specific areas, enabling community groups to work with the assistance of a dedicated local development officer, alongside a number of different agencies and local authorities. The operating principle of IatE gives the community groups the power to identify their needs, required actions and develop projects accordingly.

This case study provides some background information on IatE and analyses the key findings from a review and evaluation of IatE which was undertaken in 2007 (with a particular focus placed on the role and involvement of relevant agencies). It highlights key success factors, weaknesses and lessons for implementation of a similar initiative in the future. The case study concludes by considering whether a similar initiative would be feasible in the current policy context.

The evaluation that forms the basis of this case study was published in 2007, and there has been little mention/investigation of the initiative in wider literature since 2012. Therefore, interviews were conducted in 2020 with three stakeholders who were active at the time of IatE, to discuss the legacy of the initiative and whether it would be feasible to operate a similar process now.

Context

IatE was established in 1998 although its history can be traced back to 1997 and a belief at the time in the Scottish Office that there was a need for particular attention to be focused on some of the most remote areas of the Highlands and Islands. IatE was designed to empower communities in some of Scotland's most remote and fragile areas to identify their needs for area regeneration, consider what actions might be appropriate and develop relevant projects

in partnership with public sector agencies. Eight pilot areas were designated in 1998, and a further 10 areas were designated in 2004 (18 areas were designated in total).[43]

One of the most distinctive features of IatE was that there was no central source of funding and its success depended overwhelmingly on refocusing support already given by public sector agencies, working in partnership with community groups within the designated IatE areas. At the heart of the Initiative was a determination to secure priority attention from the main public support agencies:

> "*… the primary goal is to stimulate the changes needed to ensure the designated communities have the same opportunities as others to engage with the public sector and to facilitate their access to public sector support*."

IatE also imposed a clear timescale to encourage focused and energetic commitment from all parties to achieving the aims and objectives of the Initiative. As such, there were two distinct stages extending up to five years. The first stage, lasting for up to three years, carried the IatE badge/designation. It was then expected that the areas would be supported for up to two more years by IatE partner agencies but with less intense input. The intention with this arrangement was that the selected areas would benefit fully from IatE designation, but also that the Initiative could roll forward into new areas within a reasonable timescale, thereby maximising the impact of the Initiative over time.

An interim evaluation of IatE in 2001[44] found that the underlying ethos and concept was sound and that the Initiative had great potential to make significant positive changes to the target areas. However, some challenges were also identified, including:

- a lack of an agreed and coherent approach to what IatE was seeking to achieve beyond some broad principles;
- a poorly understood and ineffectively delivered management structure (which could particularly be traced to the National Steering Group);
- a failure of a significant proportion of agencies to 'fully sign up' to the ethos and implications of IatE;
- a lack of action plans in seven out of the eight areas; and
- the absence of coherent monitoring activity.

Following this interim evaluation, the Initiative was subject to internal review resulting in the issue of the 2001-2003 IatE Strategy Statement that provided guidance on the operation of the Initiative.

[43] Areas included: Colonsay, Ardnamurchan, Eriskay, Lochboisdale, Bays of Harris, Uig and Bernera, North Sutherland, Westray and Papa Westray.
[44] EKOS (2001) Interim evaluation of Initiative at the Edge/ Iomairt aig an Oir, EKOS Limited, April.

A place-based policy framework

At the time of IatE, the general policy context in Scotland emphasised social inclusion, partnership working, community participation and the transfer of experience and best practice.[45] Much had been achieved over the previous couple of decades from the application of increasingly refined packages of measures designed to tackle the problems of communities disadvantaged by their economic and social circumstances and the geography of their surroundings. Learning from these measures suggested that an approach was required which would be sufficiently robust to provide a policy framework with a reasonable planning horizon – those seeking to secure area regeneration and community development must be committed to the long haul - but sufficiently flexible to accommodate unforeseen events and opportunities within that.

Intervention to achieve desirable ends had become increasingly targeted and conducted within an outcome-focused and evidence-based environment. Experience also suggested that the potential to revitalise marginal communities and place them on a sound footing is enhanced when programmes and projects are undertaken as part of a coordinated and comprehensive strategy which incorporates the economic, social and environmental aspects of the regeneration process, and places these within a medium to long-term time horizon. When the imperative is to make best use of limited funding, the necessary concomitant of a strategic attack is the acceptance of the need for a partnership approach to policy generation and implementation. The principle of a partnership approach is widely accepted in policy statements as a means to making efficient and effective use of available resources, but there is still much to be achieved, including in terms of partnerships within and between the national, regional and local levels of government. Further than that, within each level, partnership agreements must be reached that make the best use of the energies, talents and resources of the private, public and voluntary sectors.

There is growing understanding of the importance of community engagement in the regeneration process, along with a commitment to the stewardship of the built and natural environments for the benefit of this and future generations. However, there is no escape from the fact that the first priority for area regeneration is the creation of economic opportunities for permanent residents.

Community Engagement and Community Development

The potential contribution of community engagement in area regeneration processes has been fully recognised. This is about harnessing the energies and initiative of members of the community to achieve aims and objectives that they can relate to and agree with, when the

[45] As identified in Cambridge Economic Associates and Research for Real Ltd (2007) Review and Evaluation of Iomairt Aig An Oir/Initiative at the Edge. Scottish Executive.

community has the capability, confidence and determination to take into its own hands those matters which it can influence, and when those charged with service delivery work with the grain of community needs and aspirations. The engagement of the community requires capacity-building through the careful nurturing of leadership and the active participation of individuals and community groups. Community capacity is a fragile construct that depends heavily on voluntary efforts that require to be continually refreshed.

Community engagement, strengthening and capacity-building are the necessary prerequisites of successful community development: the process whereby members come together to take collective action to address common problems, propose solutions and work in partnership with others, to achieve outcomes which should be sustainable in the sense that they will stand the test of time, and that they are not achieved at the expense of the legacy to be passed on to future generations. The main elements of a community development framework can be identified as: building support; making a plan; implementing the plan in partnership with all interested parties; and maintaining momentum.

For community development activity to be fully effective in area regeneration it must be firmly lodged within policy frameworks which recognise its role and understand its potential contribution to the achievement of high-level policy aims and objectives. In the past, a barrier to progress towards that desirable state of affairs has been reluctance amongst those charged with the delivery of services to relax their hold on these matters and to resist attempts to allow local people to engage fully in the development of policies and projects which affect them. The forging and maintenance of the necessary links between the levels of government and the communities typically requires some changes in attitude and approach amongst those charged with policy making and service delivery.

The rationale for the IatE was argued to be well founded and within the mainstream of current thinking on area regeneration and community development at the time. The evaluation argued that the fragile and remote areas of Scotland needed to be supported in this way if they are to realise the potential and retain population and their economic vitality.

Community Planning

It was intended that IatE be embedded within the arrangements devised for community planning in the local authority areas within which the designated areas are located. Community planning was given a statutory basis in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003, which places duties on local authorities to initiate, facilitate and maintain community planning. Core partner agencies, including health boards, the enterprise networks and Communities Scotland which are required to participate.

Community planning is a process within which it is intended that public agencies work in partnership to achieve two main aims: to make sure that individuals and communities are

genuinely engaged in decisions which affect them; and a commitment from organisations to work together to provide better delivery of services. These aims are to be achieved by the application of two principles: an over-arching partnership framework helping to coordinate initiatives and partnerships; and making connections between national priorities at the regional, local and neighbourhood levels. It was recognised that IatE would need to fit in well with the evolving community planning process and with social inclusion priorities.

More locally, the IatE areas fell within the area and remit of Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) regarding encouraging economic development, social inclusion and environmental improvement. At the national level, 'Rural Scotland: a new approach'[46] outlined a new approach to areas relatively remote from main centres of population and relatively poorly served by social and physical infrastructure.

In 'A Partnership for Scotland'[47], growing the economy is identified as the top priority. In 'A Smart Successful Highlands and Islands'[48], an enterprise strategy identified was the place of the region in Scotland as a whole. The revised version of the strategy carries forward the strategic objectives of the national enterprise strategy, together with the crosscutting themes of sustainable development and closing the opportunity gap. Six Closing the Opportunity Gap objectives were launched in 2004, including that of improving access to high quality services for the most disadvantaged groups and individuals in rural communities to improve their quality of life and enhance their access to opportunity.

Key characteristics of IatE

Although it is hard to attribute specific outcomes to the IatE Programme, or to a particular timescale (especially as IatE was an operational programme rather than a clearly defined spending programme), the majority of activities pursued under the IatE banner were either brought forward significantly in time (between three and five years) or took place because of the IatE processes that were put in place. Most activities taken forward were likely to have a long-term life of five years or more, but there was evidence that some activities would need ongoing funding support if they were to be maintained (and the availability of such long-term funding was uncertain).

Four stages of IatE designation were identified:

1. inception
2. establishment
3. consolidation
4. delivery

[46] (Scottish Executive 2000)
[47] (Scottish Executive 2003)
[48] (HIE 2005)

Interviews carried out with stakeholders in 2020 suggested that the objectives of IatE were fairly well specified, but they were partly met, or only met to a modest extent. The focus of IatE development plans suggest that they were focused on well-established central themes, including:

- business development and employment creation;
- tourism development and promotion;
- land use;
- infrastructure and the environment; and
- local services, particularly for young people.

Community development groups and Local Development Officers

A key element of IatE was the role of community development groups (drawn from the wider community and acting as vehicles by which community-led involvement was undertaken) in setting the development agenda – which worked very well. Communities were encouraged to articulate the needs of their area and the Initiative was flexible enough to work across a wide range of local issues. However, this meant that the most pressing issues were not always addressed and there were challenges when IatE areas encompassed more than one community or when existing groups addressed single interests or particular themes.

The community groups benefitting from IatE worked with the assistance of a designated Local Development Officer (LDO), alongside several different agencies and local authorities. The role of LDOs was pivotal in helping support (and often initiate) community development groups, as well as acting as a bridge between communities and public sector service providers and sourcing additional resources. However, feedback from the interviewees in 2020 suggested that more sources should have been available to provide training, administrative support and suitable office-based working conditions for them. Despite the critical role of the LDOs, they were employed on short-term contracts, which created uncertainty and inefficiencies in the development process.

A consistent feature was that every community development group, led by the LDO, was expected to prepare a development plan for its area with some seedcorn funding provided for this purpose. Considerable effort was devoted to identifying local issues and prioritising these as part of the plan-making process, although often it was difficult to reach consensus on priorities. However, wider community awareness of group activities and discussions was sometimes limited and the extent of engagement efforts varied. Plans also could have been strengthened by greater use of data on local conditions and trends, evidence of particular need (e.g. from existing surveys), analysis of measures already in hand by different organisations, and identification and justification of gaps that still required attention. There was also some criticism of the lack of prioritisation in some plans.

Community councils were already active in some IatE areas and in some cases they saw themselves as 'natural brokers of relationships' between communities and statutory agencies. Although few tensions were observed, there was some evidence that the 'service territory' was informally carved up between the community council and the IatE community development group with the emphasis of the latter on projects leading to area regeneration while the community council focused on improvements to existing service delivery.

The role and effectiveness of the National Coordinating Officer was also deemed to be critical in linking communities and the National Steering Group.

Agency engagement /stakeholder engagement

One of the central features of IatE was to ensure that communities in Scotland's most remote and fragile areas were able to engage effectively with public sector agencies and articulate their needs. The hope was that the mainstream providers of local services would be able to prioritise delivery accordingly and, where appropriate, reflect this in what happened on the ground.

From the evaluation, higher levels of engagement were apparent between IatE groups and local authority central/corporate services, HIE and the local enterprise network, Communities Scotland and the Crofters Commission. However, engagement with health boards, certain other local authority departments (e.g. education), public transport agencies and ferry services was noticeably weak or absent. Amongst the partner agencies, there was little evidence of systematic sharing of good practice learned from IatE areas; if IatE had really penetrated the mindset of mainstream delivery this would be expected to be a prominent feature of activity on the ground.

There were examples of where public service agencies had contributed more resources and greater priority to IatE areas; however, agency commitment to IatE (set out in a 'statement of intent'), overall, was weaker than had been anticipated. Agencies were typically consulted during the preparation of the development plans, in most cases through attending meetings of the community development group. However, when it came to making categorical, irrevocable commitments, the assessment of the evaluation authors, is that partnership agreement was rarely made in clear and unambiguous terms and even more rarely in ways that would identify outcomes as opposed to outputs.

There was some, but not enough, evidence of public service agencies reviewing their activities or delivery, establishing priorities, providing support and guidance on a one-to-one basis or facilitating public meetings in the IatE areas. Some agencies were involved in softer forms of support, including attending local meetings and advising on technical matters relating to project proposals. Overall, public service agencies did not give the IatE areas

sufficient special focus and priority in their mainstream (as opposed to discretionary) funding.

The lack of an overarching and consistently delivered communication strategy held back the Initiative in some of the designated areas and led to challenges with managing expectations. Despite this, the 'IatE badge' and promotion of its policy significance amongst key public service providers was important: the approach provided flexibility for issues and priorities to be identified across a very broad spectrum (much broader than specific expenditure programmes). However, it was noted in the evaluation that expectations about IatE's purpose and ways of working could have been managed better.

Key success factors and challenges

Successes

The IatE areas made very good progress in assembling funding to deliver a range of development projects valued by local communities, and grant funding bodies recognised the 'IATE badge' by allocating higher priority to applications from these areas. Several positive changes were noted by interviewees in their areas (e.g. in relation to roads, local shops, employment and activities for young people), and IatE resulted in increases in confidence and optimism amongst respondents about the future of their areas.

The 2007 evaluation summarises the key success factors of IatE as:

- The active encouragement of IatE communities too articulate the needs of their area;
- The flexibility to identify issues and priorities across a very broad spectrum – much broader than specific expenditure programmes;
- The dedicated support available to communities in the form of a LDO;
- The IatE badge and the promotion of its policy significance among key public service providers;
- The development plan, and the associated process of communication, consensus building and prioritisation;
- The availability of seedcorn funding to assist with development planning.

The 2007 evaluation also concluded that the key strengths of IatE were:

> "*its tailored, flexible, community-led approach to improving the quality of life in remote and inaccessible rural areas. Weaknesses were identified to be a lack of strategic positioning of IATE with other initiatives, a tendency for priorities to be stretched too thinly and for the opportunities for inter-agency working not to be realised*." (p iv)

The interviews in 2020 with IatE stakeholders echoed the 2007 evaluation: that there were key success criteria of IatE which were linked to the dedication of those involved with IatE.

Additionally, in the 2020 interviews, other success factors included the change from a top-down approach by the public bodies to more bottom-up, community-led grassroots action which gave the communities new powers. Collaboration between public bodies and a shifting focus in HIE and other groups to IatE case study areas across Scotland were also highlighted. Additionally, in relation to funding, it was noted in the interviews that the funding was a standard funding process which was not too onerous.

Challenges

Despite the successes noted above, there were several weaknesses that restricted the success of the initiative. One key shortfall was that there was deemed a lack of direction and strategic management at national level. The National Steering Group was expected to resolve strategic obstacles to development but it did not play a leadership role, nor were opportunities maximised for it to assess progress properly or to influence the organisational behaviour of the agencies involved. The abolition of the Management Group was seen as an error and significantly weakened strategic leadership. Feedback suggests that the success of IatE was heavily dependent on the community planning arrangements which were intended to be the main vehicles for implementation. In those local authorities with well-developed arrangements, IatE had the opportunity to work well and actively address the needs of the most fragile areas. In those where the arrangements are less mature, the problems of implementation had apparently been more significant.

At the time of the evaluation in 2007, awareness of the programme objectives amongst key participants in the process was lower than it should have been for an initiative that had been running for almost a decade. There was a lack of certainty, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities, regarding exit strategies following IatE in many of the areas, and momentum was lost in the IatE areas (particularly the pilot areas) after formal designation was lost. There was a damaging effect on momentum as a result of the short life of the formal designation, the loss of the IatE badge and the designation of further IatE areas in the future.

Whilst positive changes were experienced under IatE, some of the most pressing issues for the designated areas (e.g. affordable housing, jobs, roads and the retention of young people) were often matters that respondents felt had got worse during the time of the programme. These are deep-seated, underlying problems that demand a long planning horizon for their solutions.

The interviewees who discussed IatE in 2020 raised similar examples of potential hindrances to the success of IatE. Short-term funding minimised the longevity of the initiative, and staff often had to work additional hours above their required work hours and there were not enough LDOs.

The 2007 evaluation also cites some of the feedback provided by LDOs in terms of a new initiative gaining credibility through:

- A preliminary stage of communication that avoid jargon;
- A sensitive approach to existing structures and the roles played by key individuals;
- The need for plain speaking about what the Initiative was about and how it could fit into existing structures;
- Clarity about the roles that community group members were expected to play;
- Clarity about governance arrangements and standards, with training made readily available in user-friendly form to community group members, on chairing and participating in meetings; and
- The need for some early successes as well as reminders about what had been achieved, and where steady progress was being made towards longer-term goals.

Lessons for the future?

Community strengthening and development are desirable and provide the necessary underpinning for long-term sustainable regeneration. However, by themselves they were not sufficient to achieve the objectives of IatE. The 2007 evaluation found that there was no doubt that the future of the Initiative depended on a change in the level of commitment of the key agencies involved at all levels, and their approach to the allocation of resources to the identified needs in the IatE areas. Without more in the way of strategic direction, and focused attention by key agencies, sustainable area regeneration and community development of the IatE areas was unlikely to be secured.

The evaluation findings also indicated that six other ingredients were necessary for the benefits of IatE to be maximised:

1. Strong leadership and firm coordination at national level;
2. Acceptance that these most fragile of fragile areas are likely to present an ongoing regeneration and service priority – there are no quick fixes;
3. Clear and well managed arrangements for transition following a period of designation;
4. A clear and explicit relationship with community planning arrangements;
5. Stability and continuity in delivery arrangements and personnel;
6. A process of ongoing learning and evaluation.

In the context of the policy framework at the time, one of the challenges surrounding the implementation and the delivery of the programme was that, whilst there was an array of agencies and others already tasked with the delivery of an assortment of programmes and initiatives designed to address the disadvantages for communities resident in the fragile and peripheral areas of the Highlands and Islands, it had become increasingly apparent that a

'top-down' approach had been less successful than was hoped. Area regeneration of marginal communities that is sustainable in the longer term, could also not rely simply on the input of public resources to meet particular problems. What was needed was: "*a fresh look at area regeneration and community development and how they can be best addressed within a context set by limited financial resources*" (p.ii).

Crucial to the success of the IatE Programme was the engagement of communities with their public sector partners in order to ensure a better fit between needs and service provision, through for example, reallocating resources to better meet needs, focusing policy on specific goals and objectives, reshaping services to reflect local needs, joining up services, programmes and targets and learning from best practice. The argument for achieving more effective engagement between local communities and mainstream providers is clear enough. However, to bring this about typically requires changing the approach of a large number of actors and agencies and altering often deeply entrenched views and attitudes and methods of delivery. It requires joining-up and coordinating endeavours at local, regional and national level. Moreover this has to be achieved in a way that is inclusive and which involves local people and their communities is in the process of change, and the response has to be tailored to the particular needs of the area and its community.

The 2007 review suggested that public bodies and key spending departments of the Scottish Executive did not give the IatE areas sufficient special focus and priority in their activities. This did vary by service provider however with more progress with Scottish Natural Heritage and Communities Scotland than with NHS Scotland and some local authority service departments (e.g. education), the police, public transport agencies and ferry services. There was also more evidence of agency engagement between IatE groups and local authority central/corporate services, HIE and the local enterprise company network, Communities Scotland and the Crofters Commission. The 2007 evaluation noted that a review of previous programmes revealed a nagging concern that previous models of intervention had failed to help communities to engage with their respective mainstream public service providers.

There was little or no evidence of best practice being systematically shared across agencies (although there was some sharing of experiences, ideas and information between IatE communities), which the evaluators argued demonstrated that it had not really penetrated the mindset of mainstream delivery in public service agencies. IatE had little impact on the way in which agencies engage with communities on service planning and service performance.

Present day feasibility

Echoing the conclusions of the 2007 evaluation, for a similar scheme to work in the present day there needs to be more cohesion and commitment from the agencies involved. A weakness identified from the interviews carried out in 2020 was a misunderstanding of the

agencies and the 'on the ground' issues faced by the community. There was also a lack of understanding from the higher levels of governance (e.g. HIE) of how much capacity was needed to run projects under IatE, with high rates of volunteers / overtime often required.

Community investment is extremely important for the success, and on reflection from the discussions in 2020 by those involved at the time, committed, engaged employees and volunteers who are willing to work extra hours is imperative for successful projects.

It is evident that IatE was experienced differently in different areas, reflecting how it is still difficult to create a 'blanket' policy that works for every smaller community. This highlights and reaffirms the importance of place-based policies for rural areas. For some communities, where IatE was successful and its legacy is still apparent, a similar initiative perhaps would not be as necessary, as positive changes are taking place and focus on other priorities may be required. For other communities, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated recovery, community development schemes and initiatives, such as IatE, would be valuable to the community.

Case study 5: Land reform policy and transformational community change

Land reform policy and transformational community change

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This research focusses on the impact of land reform and community empowerment policies on place-based communities. In particular, the research seeks to understand the influence of the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 provisions for engaging communities in decisions relating to land, the Land Rights and Responsibilities statement, and other measures that influence how land ownership and land use decisions influence rural community development.

This case study draws on emerging results from a longitudinal study of six privately-owned estates and the rural communities adjacent to or located on the estate. This project revisits the research participants who were interviewed during the part of the 'Sustainable Estates for the 21st Century' project in 2009-2010[49], with the aim of identifying how policy changes in the intervening decade have led to changes in estate management, objectives, and rural community sustainability.

The case study locations and participants remain anonymous. Case study locations were selected where community engagement was highlighted as an objective of the estate management in 2008, and to provide a geographical spread across upland Scotland.

The methodology involved in-depth, semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of representatives of the private estates and rural community case study locations. The interview guide is based on the original study, with a focus on indicators of social, economic and environmental change over the previous decade in both estate and community. This data collection is ongoing and indicative analysis is based on interviewer notes with reference to transcripts, rather than a full qualitative thematic analysis. At the time of writing, 17 individuals had been interviewed from four case study locations.

[49] See Glass et al., 2013; McKee et al., 2013; McKee, 2015.

Context

The case study locations revisited during this project are located across rural Scotland and in predominantly upland (above 200m) areas. Table D presents the key characteristics of the four case study private estates so far explored in this longitudinal study.

TABLE D PRIVATE ESTATE CASE STUDY CHARACTERISTICS

Case Study	Region	Ownership structure	Resident /absentee owner	Key estate enterprises
1	Badenoch and Strathspey	Combination: Sole trader (private owner), Trust and Limited Company	Resident	Forestry, in-hand farming, game shooting, renewable energy, residential and commercial leases.
2	Aberdeenshire	Sole trader (private owner)	Absentee	Game shooting, holiday cottages, grazing leases.
3	Argyll	Combination: Trust, Limited Company and Partnership	Resident	Renewable energy, holiday cottages, forestry, residential and commercial leases.
4	Sutherland	Sole trader (private owner)	Absentee	Crofting tenancies and commercial leases.

Table E presents the key characteristics of the four case study rural communities so far explored. Changes and additions from 2009 are highlighted in bold.

TABLE E SUMMARY PROFILE OF ASSOCIATED CASE STUDY LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Case Study	1	2	3	4
Pattern of housing on/around estate	Scattered housing, settlement under 300 households	Scattered housing, settlement under 300 households	Scattered housing, settlement under 300 households	Crofting community, settlement under 300 households
Rural classification (1)	Remote rural	Remote rural	Remote rural	Very remote rural
Approximate Population (2)	620 **(increasing due to planning permission for additional**	**808 (2011 census)**	**200 (approximate; 2011)**	**132 (2011 census; reported decline of primary school roll)**

	housing granted in 2020)			
Main Services	Café **(former village shop and post office closed in 2016),** community hall, church, hotel/pub, primary school.	Village shop, post office, village hall, primary school, hotel, social club, restaurant, church, doctors surgery, bus service, petrol station, retained fire station, **community-managed tourism attraction; community-owned land for affordable housing development.**	Hotel/pub **(closed throughout 2020 due to pandemic)**, church, village hall, **community-owned** childcare facility, community resource centre, restaurant, garden centre, **community-managed renewable energy, path network.**	Village shop, post office, village hall, primary school, hotel **(closed throughout 2020 due to pandemic)**, restaurant, caravan park, churches, doctors surgery, petrol station, retained fire station, **path network, community-owned playing field and changing pavilion; community-owned land for development of tourism attraction.**
Active Community Groups	Community Council, Community Development Company, Hall Committee, Playgroup, Mixed sports clubs, Scottish Women's Rural Institute, Community Transport Scheme.	Community Council, Hall Committee, Cultural Society, Scottish Women's Rural Institute, Annual Pantomime.	Community Council, Hall Committee, Community Development Trust, Curling Club, Bowling Club.	Community Council, Hall Committee, Grazings Committee, Playgroup, Local Food Cooperative, **Community Development Company.**

(1) Rural classification after Scottish Government (2010); (2) Approximate population established through pre-fieldwork desk-based study and discussion with case study participants (in 2009-2010, as census data does not provide the population detail at the scale of the individual, estate-associated, rural community).

Local service provision

Service provision in the four rural communities so far revisited demonstrate service provision histories and concerns commonplace to remote rural areas. Key concerns are regarding broadband access, access to affordable housing (in particular to retain young people), employment opportunities, and maintaining school rolls, where declining pupil numbers are

considered a consequence of youth outmigration and an ageing rural population. Key recent changes are illustrated in Table E**Error! Reference source not found.** above; notably loss of community hubs such as village shops and post offices, as well as hospitality venue closures throughout 2020 due to the Covid pandemic. The pandemic also highlighted issues of poverty in these rural communities, leading to community organisations funding individual broadband requirements, mobile data, and establishing local foodbanks.

A key change over the past decade as illustrated in Table E is the provision of services directly by community organisations and the ownership of land and other assets through which to provide community benefit. These changes are considered further in the following section.

Place-based approaches to land reform

In the four case study communities so far revisited, several changes observed over the past decade indicate the influence of these place-based policies are evident from the initial analysis. In three case studies, community organisations have sought to and have acquired land from the private estate, to develop community facilities/services. In two cases, land has been bought directly from the private estate following a successful application to the Scottish Land Fund that provided a grant for the land value. The location of one site is suited to meeting aspirations for a tourism facility owned and managed by the community development company. In the second example, the land was bought to facilitate the construction of a building for a local social enterprise and key community service.

In a further case study, the community body have acquired land for affordable housing development, via a Section 75 planning agreement. In this example, land has been transferred from private to community ownership at no cost, due to planning obligations facing the private landowner. This transfer will enable the community organisation to build affordable housing. The acquisition of land by community bodies reflects the influence of Scottish Government policies to encourage community landownership, not least the continuation of the Scottish Land Fund.

A further example is found in a third case study where, over the previous decade, a community organisation has established a lease of land for a renewable energy development from the neighbouring private estate. This lease provides an income for both the private estate and the community organisation.

A further shift indicative in this initial longitudinal analysis is the maintenance, development, and initiation of new community development companies, trusts, and other constituted organisations. The formalisation of community groups, although most largely run by volunteers, could be seen to indicate a shift in community empowerment (i.e. through building capacity and confidence to tackle substantial projects). Constituted community

groups with robust governance mechanisms are a prerequisite to eligibility for applications to funding that has been made available from the Scottish Government and other charitable funding organisations for community development, including asset-based community development.

Lived experiences in communities

The influence of land reform-related policies and Government support, not least the Scottish Land Fund, have led to transformational changes in the community case studies, as described by the interviewees so far. The ability to acquire land for community use has facilitated the development of key local services and businesses. It is reported that purchases were readily negotiated with private estates supportive of land sales to the community. In two case studies, land has been transferred to the community (or for a community development) at no cost, and rental windows have been agreed (i.e. land rents are paused until the community group have raised income).

It is questioned as to whether these developments have been as a result of land reform policy, or instead decided by the landowner for reputational reasons or as a morally-correct action. For example, as one community interviewee notes:

> *"I very much doubt that it was because of what the government policy was, I think it's much more likely it was seen to be a nice thing to do."*

A legacy of recent land reform legislation (i.e. the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016) has been the emergence of perceived risk of increasing farm tenant security, which has led to farm tenancy changes, notice of non-renewal, and a decline in availability of new tenancies by private landowners. This is exemplified in one case study, and it is noted by a community interviewee that changes to farm tenancies are a result of Government policy:

> "*they are trying to give tenant farmers more rights and a stronger case to run their business and all it's doing is scaremongering the landowners and now the issue with landowners is, if we can get rid of you, we'll get rid of you, and this seems to be what's happening now*".

Contradictory policy messages?

The private landowners and land managers who have so far contributed to this research have strongly emphasised their perception of contradictory policy messages and goals from the Scottish Government and associated government organisations, e.g. NatureScot, the Scottish Land Commission, etc, as well as local authorities and National Park authorities.

One example was with regard to renewable energy planning decisions in contrast with the Government's goals for reducing climate change, as described:

"in terms of actually achieving government targets and making the land sustainable but on the one hand it comes back to this the left arm doesn't know what the right arm is doing, we are often constrained by bureaucracy, well bureaucracy and government".

The interviewees assert that these contradictions and the increase in bureaucracy associated with land management are a result of a lack of knowledge on the part of policymakers and a prejudice by the Scottish Government to the private land management community.

Despite the examples of land transfers to local community ownership, these interviewees also described their scepticism around the sustainability and accountability of community landownership, again indicating a divide in viewpoints between (some) private landowners and Scottish Government land reform policy goals. For example:

"*if you have a community buy-out you have no leadership (I'm generalising obviously) you have inexperience, you find it very difficult to have an objective because there's so many people involved, you have no finances to support it, it all comes from tax payers' money, effectively, government funding. And so that's to me, not the way to run a sustainable business.*"

The case study interviews have considered the opportunities for greater collaboration between private estate management and local community groups (and individuals). Suggestions have included greater involvement with and capacity within existing community councils (especially due to their role as statutory consultees, and with an elected structure), and the role of community action plans, that bring together different local interests (including estates) in its development. This is an important area for further investigation in this ongoing research.

An ongoing challenge to positive estate-community engagement that does not appear to have adequate support through land reform and associated policy, is with regard to succession planning by private estate owners and transitions between different owners (or generations of family ownership). Similar issues arise in community organisations which have maintained a core group or leadership over a number of years. An interviewee commented that '*a major threat to the community would be a change of ownership*', whilst others have noted that land management approaches are changing with the increasing influence of the landowners' intended successor. Critically, relationships built up between the private landowner (or landowners' representative) can be disrupted or lost through such transitions that can in turn risk positive engagement between private estate and rural community.

So far there has been no mention of the Land Rights and Responsibilities Statement by either private landowner or community interviewees, which may indicate that this document has not become a reference point for land management decision-making and the anticipated cultural shift that seeks to democratise land management (i.e. with greater

community engagement and empowerment in decision-making) has not materialised. However, a discourse of responsibility is emphasised by the private landowner and land manager interviewees (i.e. their position as 'custodians'), that could be considered as responding in part to the policy goals around landownership accountability and responsibility, whilst also maintaining the status quo in terms of private property rights. This interpretation requires more investigation in the full qualitative analysis.

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